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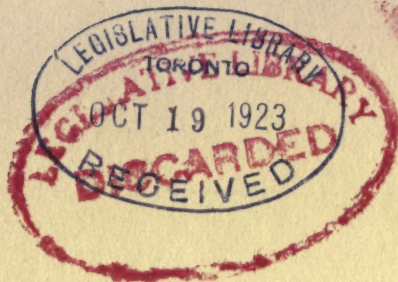
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**AN ADMINISTRATOR IN
THE MAKING**

JAMES SAUMAREZ MANN, 1893 - 1920



Walter L. Ellis, So.

Saumarez at Cambridge: 1916.

AN ADMINISTRATOR IN THE MAKING

JAMES SAUMAREZ MANN, 1893-1920

EDITED BY HIS FATHER

55854

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS
AND A MAP



'When I read letters from friends of my own who are engaged in this work of world-government, I sometimes feel that it brings out in good men a disinterested heroism, a sort of inspired and indefatigable kindness, which is equalled by no other profession.'

PROF. GILBERT MURRAY,
Satanism and the World Order

55854

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PREFATORY NOTE

THE nucleus of this book consists of the letters describing the life and work of a novice in administration, during a difficult and anxious period of transition, in a remote corner of a region brought under British influence by one of the incidental results of the world-war. Work of the same kind is doubtless being done daily in all the remoter and less civilised parts of the British Empire; but in this case the opportunities for doing it were exceptional. It is now permissible to hope that, after the interruption of 1920 caused by Nationalist misapprehension and impatience, it may be resumed and carried through under the British advisers of the new Arab Kingdom, with Great Britain as the mandatory Power.

But at every stage of his career 'J. S.' made numerous friends: and, chiefly for their benefit, it has seemed advisable to prefix a memoir, also consisting mainly of extracts from letters, and exhibiting his previous life and his activities in two of the military byways opened up by the war. The last chapter shows him as others saw him at different stages of his career.

The Mesopotamian photographs were taken by himself. The Sanskrit inscription prefixed to the Appendix, with his own very free paraphrase, stands at the beginning of the notebook containing the verses and the first prose sketch in the Appendix, written while in hospital at Oxford in 1915.

The Editor desires to express his gratitude to the many friends who have generously assisted him with appreciations, letters, and information: to the Editors of the *Nation* and the *Westminster Gazette* for permission

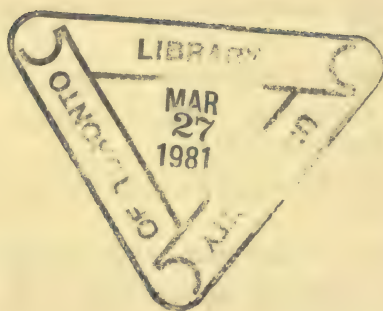
to republish matter that has appeared in their columns : and to Sir Arnold Wilson, K.C.I.E., C.S.I., late Acting Civil Commissioner in Mesopotamia, Captain Matthews, in command of the Arab troops besieged in Kufa, Captains Hopkins and O'Connor, and, above all, Major Norbury, D.S.O., all members in 1920 of the Mesopotamian Political Administration, for their unfailing and invaluable help in elucidating the history of the rising of that year in Shamiyah.

J. S. M.

BROMLEY, KENT,
September 1921.

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MAP OF SHAMIYAH AND THE ADJACENT DISTRICTS

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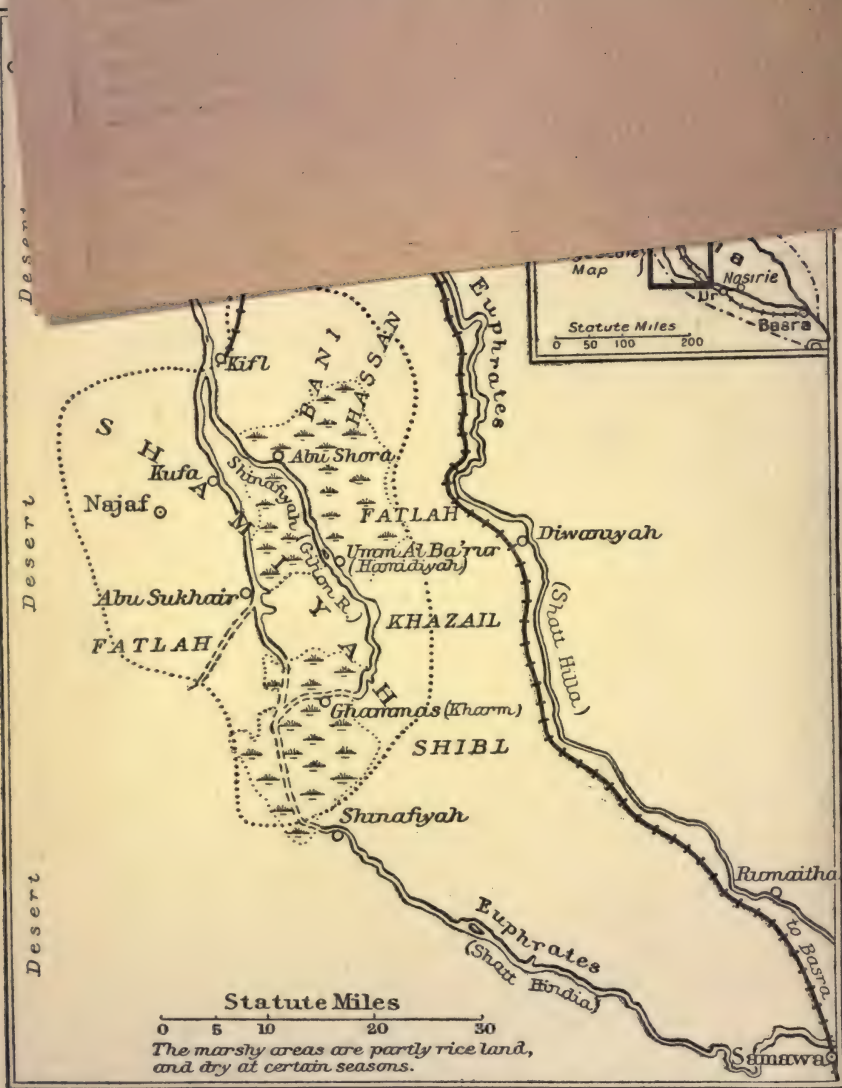


CHAPTER I

EARLY YEARS, 1893-1914

JAMES SAUMAREZ MANN, the third in hereditary succession to bear the name, was born at Bromley, Kent, on November 10, 1893. His father, born in Guernsey, and educated at Elizabeth College and previously in a suburb of New York, had been Scholar of Exeter and Fellow of Trinity College, Oxford, and had lectured and examined for the Honour School of Literæ Humaniores: but had turned to journalistic work in London, and in 1890 had married Amy, younger daughter of the Rev. Thomas Bowman, of Clifton, a learned classical scholar and Hebraist, whose eldest son became Warden of Merton College, Oxford, in 1903. On the father's side the family traditions were military and naval. The first James Saumarez Mann died in 1851, while still a lieutenant in the Navy, of phthisis following hardships suffered while engaged in combating the slave trade on the west coast of Africa: he had seen as much active service as most officers in that peaceful period, notably at the siege of Acre during the revolt of Mehemet Ali in 1840. His Christian names and his admission to the Navy came to him from his great-uncle and godfather, who became the first Lord De Saumarez,¹ the famous Admiral who was second in command at Aboukir and commanded the British Fleet in the Baltic towards the close of the war with Napoleon. The Admiral's niece, Miss Martha Dobree of Guernsey, married Captain

¹ As *Debrett's Peerage* explains, the name is pronounced 'Sommerez.' The Admiral belonged to the younger branch of an old Guernsey family, whose elder branch preserves the original form 'De Sausmarez.'



MAP OF SHAMIYAH AND THE ADJACENT DISTRICTS



AN ADMINISTRATOR IN THE MAKING

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Frederick William Mann of the Royal Staff Corps,¹ the youngest son of Lieutenant-General Gother Mann, R.E., whose life may be read in the 'Dictionary of National Biography,' and who has left his mark on the geography of Canada by laying out the sites of various cities, among them Toronto. Of the General's four sons, three entered the Army: Frederick William in 1795 became an ensign in the Marines, was transferred in 1804 to the Royal Staff Corps,¹ and served in Sir John Moore's army and during the Peninsular War, commanding a column at the passage of the Bidassoa. Later he commanded detachments of the corps in Canada and Corfu, retired in 1841 with the rank of Colonel, and spent the rest of his life in Guernsey. His eldest son, Major-General Gother Mann, C.B., R.E., served with distinction in the Chinese wars of 1857-58 and 1860. Richard Routh, the maternal great-grandfather of the second J. S. Mann, had been Assistant Collector of Customs at Salem, Massachusetts. His house was burnt in the Revolution. Subsequently he became Chief Justice of Newfoundland, and was lost at sea in 1801. His descent has been traced to Richard de Sourdeval, a Norman who came over with the Conqueror.

Saumarez, or Saum, as he was always called at home, was a very bright child, rather timid in his early years, always good-tempered, patient, and persevering, and never at a loss for occupation. He was quick at learning, whether at his books, handwork, or games: he could read at the age of four, and was musical from infancy: and he learnt languages, ancient or modern, with enthusiasm. On the day after he began Greek he was discovered (before breakfast) attempting to read the first Greek text he could find, which happened to be Polybius; and when nine years old he would amuse himself on Sunday afternoons by writing Hebrew exercises with the aid of a book written by his maternal grandfather to enable clergymen to teach

¹ A Corps of Military Artificers formed in 1799 by the Duke of York and under his authority as Commander-in-Chief; created because of his difficulty in obtaining the services of the existing corps, which was under the Board of Ordnance. The officers were employed also for Intelligence and Engineers' work. (Fortescue, *Hist. British Army*, vol. iv, p. 881.) It was transferred to the Board of Ordnance in 1838, and was apparently absorbed in, or replaced by, the Royal Sappers and Miners.

themselves. But at the age of ten a bad fall set up cerebral hemorrhage with symptoms which, as Sir Victor Horsley subsequently stated, had been predicted in previous cases but never yet observed, because they had been masked by graver ones. Though he recovered, he for some time exhibited occasional lapses into unconsciousness, and he was ordered to give up school and live as much as possible in the open air. Days spent in the garden at home, and on the Sussex Downs during a long visit to relatives at Worthing, restored his health and strengthened him physically, besides enabling him to learn something of gardening, poultry-keeping, and carpentering; but the nine months' break in his school attendance precluded his competing for an entrance scholarship at a Public School. At seven he was sent with his sister to a small day-school, and at nine he went on to a preparatory day-school for boys close to his home. He soon worked his way to the top, and was described as showing great promise: the Head Master reported: 'I have never known a boy with such an active brain.' In September 1906 he entered Dulwich College as a day-boy. Beginning in the Lower Fourth, he rose rapidly, reaching the Classical Remove at Easter, 1908. He gained a Senior School Scholarship, and his Form Master, Mr. H. W. Hose, wrote to his father in July 1909: 'He seems to me to have remarkable ability in many ways, especially in his power of translating into English. This point was specially noticed by the Examiner in the School Scholarship Examination, and has been very noticeable for some time past. His Greek translation papers this term and last have been really striking. Apart from all question of ability, the spirit in which all his work has been done ever since he has been in my Form and his willingness to learn and try suggestions have been most striking. I feel he has the true scholar's spirit, and earnestly hope it will develop to the full.'

Meanwhile two other influences were helping to form his character. Two visits a year to the seaside till he went to school, and one every year afterwards, each time at a different place—in England, Wales, Guernsey, Jersey, and later in Normandy and Brittany—had given him wider experience of country than falls to the lot of most school-boys: and he and his sister had grown up predisposed to

travel, and specially fond of long country excursions on foot or otherwise. He was brought up in the Church of England, in an atmosphere which may be described as Liberal and Evangelical; but when twelve years old he joined a small unsectarian class of boys, meeting at different houses for an hour on Sunday afternoons, to hear and discuss an address by a visitor or a paper by one of the members, another of whom wrote the minutes of the meeting. The avowed object of the Class was 'to show the strength and reality of the service of Christ': and it undoubtedly stimulated a desire among its members to engage in active Christian work. Saumarez was confirmed by the Bishop of Southwark (Dr. Talbot) on May 26, 1910, in Dulwich College Chapel, after preparation by the Master.

He entered the Sixth in September 1909, and always stood high in the Form. He served in the School O.T.C., and in July 1910 marched with it from the College to camp at Arundel; played Rugby football, took violoncello and organ lessons, sang, and in later years played, at the College Concerts, and for two years running went to a Public School Camp. His last School Report described him as 'a good and devoted Prefect, who has worked always for the good of the School,' and expressed special gratitude to him for 'placing his great musical talents at our service so ungrudgingly.'

Of his school life more especially, a fellow Alleynian, Mr. G. Kennedy Skipton, wrote: 'I think the best description of him is one which was applied to a very similar character, Arthur Hallam—"anima naturaliter Christiana." I never knew him do or say a single thing in the least inconsistent with such a description, nor, I am sure, did anybody else.'

He left Dulwich College at Midsummer, 1912. In the summer of 1911 he had joined a reading party of his school-fellows at Southwold under Mr. Fortescue, of Worcester Cathedral School; and in December he went up for a Balliol Scholarship in Classics, and was third on the list of successful candidates. The other two were Arthur Innes Adam,¹ of Winchester College, and Kenneth Reginald

¹ Son of a famous Cambridge Classical Tutor and scholar; afterwards Captain in the 2nd Battalion Cambridge Territorials; 'wounded and missing' on the Ancre, September 16, 1916. See *Arthur Innes Adam*, by his mother.

Potter,¹ of Dulwich College. Saumarez was described in a letter to his father from the Master as 'in some respects the best pure scholar of the three.'

During his schooldays he had become more musical than ever, and with his sister had accompanied his parents in their brief annual holidays in the Channel Islands, Normandy, and Brittany. He was from the first a delightful travelling companion—always interested and keenly appreciative, never put out by mishaps or the slight ailments which now and then mar a Continental holiday, and delighting alike in things ancient and modern, in megalithic monuments, Breton pilgrimages and Pardons, and railway and steamer travel, in open air, sea, wind, and sky. One of many pleasant memories may be recorded here. At Vannes in 1912 the party were in the Cathedral, when a wedding procession, evidently of considerable social importance, entered by the great western doors. Three of the travellers, mindful of lunch time and fearing to be locked in during the service, retreated hastily; but Saumarez had found his way to the organ loft, and had so impressed the organist with his competence that he was invited to stay to the end of the ceremony and close it by playing the Wedding March. But every organ has its own peculiarities, which can only be learnt by experience; so he felt compelled to decline the invitation.

He went into residence at Balliol in October 1912. Mr. Cyril Bailey was his Tutor. The Warden's house at Merton was always open to him, and his only sister had been for two years in residence at Somerville and was just beginning to read for Honour Greats. He settled down at once into the busy intellectual and social life of a scholar of Balliol. With his contemporaries, he went in at the end of term for the Craven and Ireland Scholarships—merely, of course, to gain experience—and arrived at home for Christmas rather tired, but all the better in health for his Oxford life.

In particular he had been attracted to two pursuits outside his work: music, by the weekly Balliol concerts; and helping to run the Balliol Boys' Club, started in St.

¹ Afterwards Lieutenant 7th Battalion Norfolk Regiment; Military Cross, 1916; wounded and taken prisoner, November 1917.

Ebbe's for the benefit of the working boys of Oxford City six years before.¹

Early in his second term Saumarez writes to his mother:

January 19, 1913.— . . . I was rather pleased last night to get a note from Dr. Walker asking me to play the organ at the Concert on February 23. We always have one amateur one—not necessarily confined to Balliol performers—every term, and it seems generally to be even better attended than the others; at all events there's always a fearful crush. So you see it's quite a compliment. He suggests that I should play the Prelude and Fugue in E minor that I played at the School concert: of course that's the only one that he has heard me play. Personally I think it would be nice to play the one in G minor: I've got five weeks to work it up in: I'm going to write him a note suggesting it. I've had a very strenuous week: walked 50 miles and played two games of Rugger. . . . I've done a great deal of work too. A speech of Cicero, three books of Homer, some Martial, a lot of Aristophanes, a Prose, and an Essay, which involved reading through the 'Vicar of Wakefield,' is really quite a lot, besides lectures. . . .

February 9.— . . . I was at the Boys' Club on Saturday and had great fun. I took the shooting (with an air rifle) and had a very pleasant talk with two jolly infants, until one of them asked me how I'd like to have a drunken father. His apparently is very bad; and it's rather an awkward question. . . .

February 10.—The Boys' Club has been criticised severely lately as not being sufficiently serious, so last night a Musical Society was inaugurated there by Adam (and myself) at the request of the Committee. We took down about fifteen copies of 'Gaudeamus' and had a great time. Cyril [Bailey] turned up and assisted lustily, and about three undergrads, and fifteen or more boys; all were very hearty, and enjoyed it immensely, demanding more after

¹ See *post*, chap. viii. Frequent reference is made to this club in *The Life of Ronald Poulton*, by his father, Prof. E. B. Poulton (1919). Ronald Poulton (the famous Rugby International Football player), Keith Rae, and S. L. Reiss, all killed in the war, were prominent helpers there in its early years. The last-named was in residence when Saumarez began to work there.

the hour was completed. Of course we couldn't do much except make a noise last night, but I think we shall be able to teach them expression, and possibly a certain amount of part-singing. They really sang 'Drink to me only' quite nicely. . . .

February 26.—The Boys' Club wants to have a concert next week, and I expect I shall have to play something. Could you send me up the 'Humoreske'? I think that would probably suit them. I have to take the singing to-night. I hope they'll behave: of course somebody else is doing the piano: one would have awful times playing and looking after them as well. I am going to try and teach them to sing rounds and catches, and have purchased a most fascinating little book of 100 such; but I shall have to get a few select ones for that purpose and take them privately. . . .

March 9.—To-day Cullis¹ and I have been for a walk. We started at 11 o'clock with the intention of viewing Otmoor, examining the River Ray, and returning for tea at 7. Otmoor is a very large expanse of absolutely flat land between hills, in winter completely flooded over; and it has no roads. We got to the River Ray all right, experiencing nothing worse than 6-inch mud; but our return was a wondrous affair. We took a beautiful-looking path marked on the map and went on, hoping to fetch Stanton St. John or Beckley. This path grew steadily worse until it was crossed by a deepish river, which, however, we eventually bridged with logs. Then we found ourselves in a quagmire: all the fields were simply swimming. However, we were not prepared to go back: so, after wading through about half a mile of swamped land we decided to take off shoes and stockings and wade. This we did, and found it very cold and beastly, but after covering more than a mile thus we eventually gained terra firma at Beckley, where we found a pub. and had some food, and then walked back, arriving at 5.50. In places we had waded through some fourteen inches of water, and it was pretty cold. However, it was great fun, and we are none the worse.

¹ Colin Cullis, an old Alleynian, Scholar of Exeter College: rejected on medical grounds for war service, he found work in the Foreign Office, and subsequently in the Department for Foreign Trade; died July 1919.

For Easter he went to a Camp of Boy Scouts from Walworth, conducted by an old Alleynian, Mr. S. Marsh, at a farm at Wendover, Bucks. He wrote to his mother on March 22: 'We are all in bed at present (6 P.M.) as we have got completely wet through. . . . G. and I have done most of the cooking.'

To his mother—

Oxford, June 1.— . . . I have been quite busy this week, as I had to write an Essay on the Lupercalia, which is very complicated and requires much reference to remote works of Plutarch, Pope Gelasius, and Joannes Lydus. However, Cyril was pleased. I also had a piece of 'The Shaving of Shagpat' to do into the manner of Apuleius, which was great fun and most interesting. Hertford to-morrow, three days only. . . . I have taken to bathing at Parsons' Pleasure before breakfast, and have been in ten times this week: it has been gloriously hot and pleasant in the water. We have had especially good fun with canoes there: we take out cushions, etc., and rock them until they sink, and then play about with them, to the great amusement of other bathers.

On Saturday, June 7, the result of the Hertford Scholarship examination was announced. He was *proxime accessit*.

On June 9 he gives his father some particulars of the examination, and mentions 'a pleasant little ceremony here [at Balliol] on Saturday, when [Earl] Curzon came down to unveil portraits of Asquith and [Lord] Loreburn: the latter was present and made a speech. . . . After due consultation with Cyril [Bailey] I have accepted the Secretaryship of the Boys' Club for next term.'

To his mother—

Mytchett Camp, June 24.—We got back at midday, having covered thirty miles marching in the twenty-seven hours, besides an action. We left here at 12 yesterday, and, halting two hours for lunch near Farnham, arrived at Frensham Great Pond at 6.30. There we had a meal: bread, cold meat, and beer, cider, or ginger-beer, and were then sent out on an outpost, taking blanket

and waterproof sheet. I was third relief sentry, and should have gone on duty at 1 A.M., so laid down fully armed and equipped, and put in two hours' sleep in the heather. But at 11.45 we were called in, blankets and overcoats packed up, and a meal of sandwiches, hard-boiled eggs and cocoa given: and at 12.50 A.M. we started off on a nine miles outflanking march. We went straight to the Devil's Jumps, Kettlebury Hill, and Thursley, and then turned down the Portsmouth Road and then over country to the west again. At 4 A.M. we struck the enemy, and 'C' Company greatly distinguished itself by charging and completely putting out of action a squad of enemy's cavalry. After that there was a deadlock, but we had completely surprised them, and probably were winners: anyhow we got the battle. At 6.0 we arrived at our breakfast rendezvous (just by Elstead), but had to wait two hours in the biting cold waiting for it; however, we nearly all slept very soundly; I put in $1\frac{1}{2}$ hours. At 8.30 we started for home and did the eleven miles in capital time, being met half-way by a band of Highlanders, who were a great help. My feet stood it splendidly. . . . I slept four hours this afternoon. We have a slack day to-morrow. . . . Too dark to see any more. I can't even read what I'm writing.

The Long Vacation of 1913 was spent at home reading for Honour Mods., varied by a week in camp with the Balliol Boys' Club at Bembridge, I.W., in July, a few days at the Student Christian Meeting at Swanwick,¹ a short visit in August to the Walworth Boy Scouts' Camp conducted by Mr. Marsh, and a fortnight's tour with his family in the hill country of Central and Western Brittany. On October 1 he went to stay at Grafton (*post*, Chap. XI) with his friend Maurice Jacks.

To his mother—

Grafton, near Tewkesbury, Gloucester, October 3.—I had a most adventurous ride yesterday. I missed the 8.50 [at Paddington] and got to Oxford at 11.20, only to find

¹ He had desired for some years to become a missionary in India, and about this time had some thoughts of going out experimentally, after taking his degree, under the Church Missionary Society's short service scheme. But his Honours Course would have lasted till Midsummer 1916, and a year later he had given up the idea.

my back tyre flat. I mended it, but it wouldn't hold, so I took it to the shop and visited [his uncle]. Returning at 1 o'clock, I rode off, and hadn't gone 500 yards when the tyre burst. I took it back and they mended it free, saying the man ought to have noticed the weak spot, which was very sporting. I finally got off at 1.20 and had done six miles by ten minutes to two, when an awful thunder-storm came on. I sheltered for half an hour and then proceeded: the lightning continued for some hours, but there was hardly any more rain. I got on all right till just past Ford, which I reached about 5.30, after which place is a glorious hill down. It was getting dark, and I was about nine miles off, when suddenly a fearful thunder-storm came on, to which the former was a mere jest. I sheltered in a wood for a bit, but it got so bad I thought I had better shift, so I rode on in the pouring rain, when I suddenly saw a railway station. I went in there, and hadn't been in it half a minute when the worst clap I think I ever heard shook the whole place, so that the station-master thought it was struck. I waited there an hour until the rain slackened, and then decided to go on, as I was thoroughly wet. It was pitch dark, but the lamp held splendidly and I got here about 8.30, thoroughly wet, but very cheerful. They provided me with clothes which I am still wearing, and gave me an enormous meal of cold bacon and stewed plums, with unlimited apples to eat and a capital fire to sit over. The last eight miles from Toddington (the railway station) were pretty exciting, as one could see absolutely nothing, except when lightning lit up the road—which was fairly frequent, but awkward, as it blinds one for the moment. Once I nearly ran into the hedge at a corner, but by going slowly and very steadily I managed all right. I asked everybody I met, and also at one or two cottages, and fortunately there were no hills. . . .

To his mother—

October 30.—[His father and mother were coming up to stay with the Master of Balliol for a week-end.] Could you bring up the following: My big saw, spokeshave, hone of some kind, hammer, rule, T-square. I want to get the Club to work making some cupboards. Good-bye till Saturday.

To his mother—

November 27.— . . . The Ireland begins next Thursday and we are beginning to slack off work. It is a grim thought. Adam, Jacks and myself were thinking of going to stay at Grafton for the inside of a week to rest and refresh ourselves. I also want to make an elaborate Christmas present now the carpentering fury is upon me. But it now seems we may have to put it off. . . . I have to address George's¹ [Sunday] class on December 21 at Hampstead and Fritz's on December 28. Fortunately the same address will do for both. The cupboard is now complete except for the front, which however is the most serious part. We are very busy preparing for Parents' Night at the Club, which is on Thursday night. We are to have a play produced by Adam, which takes up all his time, and we shall have a strenuous time next week getting up the stage and dressing the performers. . . .

He was unplaced in the Craven and Ireland Scholarship Examination; came home on December 11, and spent the Vacation at home, going up again on January 16, 1914. The Mission referred to in the next two letters was conducted by the Bishop of Oxford.

To his mother—

Balliol, February 1, 1914.— . . . The Mission started to-day—wonderfully successfully as far as one can judge—with evening service at 8.30 at St. Mary's. It was packed; there must have been some 1200 people at least. The Bishop [Gore] spoke amazingly impressively; and E. K. Talbot [the Missioner] was not inferior in his conduct of the devotional part of the service. Altogether it was most impressive; but it is great demands to have to go every night for a week. I went to hear Hensley Henson this morning and thought him splendid. Of course it was Kikuyu.² He must have infuriated many

¹ Mr. George and 'Fritz' (Beney) had respectively originated and carried on the Sunday class that Saumarez had attended at home.

² At the close of a Conference between Anglican and Nonconformist missionaries at Kikuyu, East Africa, in June 1913, the Communion had been administered to the members in the Presbyterian Church by the Anglican Bishops. An emphatic protest had been subsequently published by Bishop Weston of Zanzibar.

people. . . . I addressed the Club this afternoon, and went with Julie to tea at the Nagels' ¹; so it has been a pretty busy day. . . . I went to a capital concert yesterday afternoon—to hear the Rosé quartett of Vienna; they played Mozart, Borodin, and Beethoven quartetts quite wonderfully.

To his father—

Balliol, February 8.—The Mission has been splendid; the audiences have kept up wonderfully well, with enormous crowds last Sunday, and I expect there will be as many or more to-night. I have been out all day with Julie; we walked right round Otmoor, I fancy about twenty-one miles; we got a motor-bus back from Headington most fortunately, as I should otherwise have been late for Boys' Club Committee. We got thoroughly wet, as it was a beastly day, but had a splendid walk, and the moor itself looked very properly bleak and grim. We are starting a new scheme at the Club this week, by which every member will have to be also member of a small club within the Club. (There will be six of these small clubs to start with.) It will need some organising, but I shan't have to do it, fortunately.

To his mother—

Balliol, [March —.]— . . . I am starting a fret-work class this week: eight boys have joined, and we have only four frames at present. I should awfully like two clamps and a pair of pincers, but I'm afraid they'll make an awfully heavy parcel.

To his father—

March 9.—[After a reference to that day's Mods. papers.] . . . We have just come back from a really stormy evening at the Club, in which we had to fight two boys out and turn out another nine. We had to be very careful, however, as we did not want to get hit in the eye while Mods. were on, and we succeeded in escaping very successfully, though Maurice [Jacks] got violently kicked on the leg. . . .

¹ Miss Nagel and Mr. D. H. Nagel, Fellow and Science Tutor of Trinity: the latter died in 1920.

March —.—I enclose the papers. . . . I am just going to the Boys' Club Play and Parents' Night. We shall have an awful crowd. I have cake for about seventy, and it will be fun I expect: Julie is coming.

I had a great time at Marlborough: I trained to Chippenham and walked to Marlborough on Monday (twenty miles) arriving at 6 P.M. We dined in the Common Room and talked all the evening, mostly about the Club. Then I slept in the town. On Tuesday I started at 10 and walked across the Downs to the White Horse and down to Uffington (twenty miles), getting back here at 8 P.M. It was glorious.

He had stayed for the week-end, March 14-16, with his cousin, the Rev. Gother Mann, Rector of Fifield and Idbury, Oxon, and cycled from Shipton station to Chipping Sodbury, thence going by train to stay with his aunt and uncle at Clifton. He writes from their house:

To his mother—

March 17.—Fifield is a very nice place, very small and secluded, but with a beautiful view, and the house is exceedingly comfortable. Idbury Church (the second parish) is very fine indeed, and Gother is very keen on getting it re-seated. The architect's plans arrived this morning and seemed very good, but of course he has no money for the job at all. I spent Friday (March 13) spring cleaning at the Boys' Club, and sold an incredible lot of rubbish to the rag and bone man for 1s. I spent a good deal of the day breaking up that old piano frame, and it was a very tough job. I had a boy in with me working hard all day, whom I paid 2s. 6d., as he has been out of work for some weeks and can't get anything. He was dismissed for being eight minutes late one morning. In the evening all the people in for Mods. had a dinner given by the Master, Cyril, and Picker¹: it was very great fun, and they were in capital form. I am going up to Grafton on Thursday, and have promised to play for morning service at Fifield next Sunday if necessary. . . . I shall have to go and finish up at the

¹ Mr. C. Bailey and Mr. A. W. Pickard-Cambridge, Classical Tutors of Balliol.

Boys' Club on Monday and, if there is not much to do, will come home in the evening. . . .

With the other two Classical scholars of his year and seven other Balliol men, he was placed in the First Class (of 35) in Classical Moderations. Practically all his papers were up to or above the first class mark. He went in Easter week to Mr. S. Marsh's Boy Scouts' Camp—this time at Elstree, Herts—and on April 18 went down to Warbarrow Bay, Dorsetshire, walking from Wool Station by East Lulworth to Corfe Castle, and arranged for a site for the Balliol Boys' Club Camp in July.

At the beginning of Easter Term 1914 Saumarez took part in a 'Retreat' held in connexion with the Student Christian Union, of the Oxford branch of which he was President (see *post*, Chap. XI).

To his mother—

Boar's Hill Hotel, Boar's Hill, near Oxford. Thursday [April 23].—We are getting on excellently: the ice-breaking was rather alarming, but all goes beautifully now. Neville [Talbot, afterwards Bishop of Pretoria] in his opening address completely forestalled mine, so I had to get up early this morning to prepare another. I have been down at the Club this afternoon doing a little carpentering, and shall probably spend much of to-morrow there.

The Summer Term was spent in reading for Honour Greats, beginning with Plato, varied by the customary social distractions. At its close Saumarez stayed up for the Boys' Club Regatta, and then went again to camp with the Oxford University O.T.C. near Farnborough, Hants, and subsequently to the Oxford Boys' Club Camp.

To his mother—

June 23.—We had a great regatta for the Club last night. There were six crews, and we only had two boats, so we had three heats to start with and then a semi-final. It took so long getting the boats ready that we had to put off the final till to-morrow week, when we shall be up again after camp. My boat was beaten after a great race by a very well-trained crew in the semi-final; but

the really wonderful race was between Freddy's¹ crew and Maurice's.¹ F. had not coxed before, and at the start he headed straight for Maurice's boat and almost hit it, fouling very badly (they were of course not bumping races). He then fell behind, and so they proceeded till near the end, when all M.'s crew caught crabs and F.'s came up, only to be beaten by about two feet! I was so hoarse with shouting as hardly to be able to speak after it. I had a charming Don-rag [criticism of papers in the College Terminal Examinations]. Sandy [Mr. Lindsay] was frightfully complimentary, and they gave me $a-$ and $a\beta$ for Collections: so the Master told me not to overwork and to remember that my tutor was a better judge than Hertford examiners.

To his mother—

Boys' Camp at Warbarrow Bay, Dorset. Tuesday morning [July 7].—This is actually the first quiet time I have had in which to write a letter. All is going admirably; the weather is very breezy and rough, but we had no rain at all yesterday and plenty of sun, and to-day should be the same. Sunday was simply appalling; very heavy Scotch mist and driving rain with high wind all day long. However, the chaps were simply splendid, and we had no grumbling at all. The supplies are working very well, and the tradesmen are admirable and very cheap. We are getting all our meat, steak, silverside, legs of mutton, etc., at 9d. per lb., which is good. I had to go into Wareham yesterday, and probably [shall] again on Thursday, but otherwise everything is coming out. The roads are awful and there are innumerable gates: fifteen between here and Corfe and about ten to Wareham. Hubert [Secretan] has his car, but of course uses it as little as possible. Do come down on Friday if you feel inclined. I don't know how you'd get out here, but it would be great fun. We have quite a number of visitors of both sexes coming along to the Sports that day. I shall have to stay till Monday, as the wagon cannot go in

¹ F. Baines and Maurice Jacks, both of Balliol; the former subsequently Captain 1st Battalion 4th Somerset Regiment, and now in Holy Orders; the latter afterwards Lieutenant King's Royal Rifle Corps, and Fellow and Tutor of Wadham College, Oxford.

twice in one day, and we have two loads. . . . We are going to Swanage this afternoon. We walk over the hills to Lulworth Cove (five miles), then take steamer to Swanage, and, as it is very fresh, the lads will infallibly all be ill; have a meal there, take train to Corfe, and walk back from there (six miles). We shall get in about 9 P.M.

To his mother—

Students' Camp, Swanwick, July 19.— . . . Last night (or rather this morning) from 2 to 4 A.M. I went on picket duty with another man to guard the camp and hostel from Suffragettes and the gardens from sheep. We had no experiences at all, and it was not pleasant. I have been feeling very lethargic all the time I have been here, mainly owing to the reaction from the strenuous life of the last three weeks, and the weather also has been very oppressive and wet all the time.

He returned home a day or two later, and on July 31 started for Grafton, to get ready the cottage where he had stayed with his friends Maurice Jacks and Arthur Adam, and which had been lent to his family for a fortnight. His mother and sister followed the next day, and escaped for a time from most of the rumours of war. Two young friends joined them, and on August 8, after the invasion of Belgium and the declaration of war, and amid the first signs of preparation, his father followed them for the week-end. The party walked over Bredon Hill on Sunday afternoon and the next day visited Tewkesbury and Malvern. Meanwhile Lord Kitchener, as War Minister, had issued his appeal for 100,000 men to form a new Army: and Saumarez, rather against the wishes of his parents, who had not yet realised the full gravity of the crisis, but in accordance with the strong advice of his College Tutor, went before the Enlistment Committee at Oxford on August 13. As a member of the Oxford O.T.C., he was offered the prospect of a Commission in Lord Kitchener's Army, and accepted on the spot. The party came home on August 15, after a prolonged picnic and a visit to Stratford-on-Avon: and on August 29 Saumarez was ordered to report at Oxford on August 31. He was sent to the Officers' Training Camp at Churn.





SAUMAREZ AT TEN YEARS OLD.



SAUMAREZ IN 1915.
(From a photograph taken in Balliol Quad,
by Mr. F. F. Urquhart.)

CHAPTER II

IN TRAINING FOR ACTIVE SERVICE, SEPTEMBER 1914 TO MAY 1915

To his father—

Officers' Training Camp, Churn, September 6, 1914.—We are an odd collection here. First of all there are the obvious 'bloods,' Blues and Honourables, who will make the typical British officer, and do it very well. Then there are the more or less intellectuals, S. L. Reiss,¹ A. G. Heath,² etc. (among whom I may reckon myself), who will, I think, be thoroughly efficient and frightfully conscientious, but will never attain to the smartness of the 'born Etonian,' or be able to address their men in the full consciousness that they themselves belong to an obviously superior caste. Thirdly, there are some hopeless people (hopeless, I mean, from the Colonel's point of view), who gibber when called out to drill a squad, and appear never to learn. But of course a month of this hard drilling will make a great deal of difference, even to these. Nobody who has not passed all the Colonel's exams. (oral) and been certified as efficient by his Company Officer will be passed out to his regiment at the end of the month; but of course they will pass everybody possible owing to the need of instruction for the New Army. We are remarkably well fed and housed, three in a tent with camp beds and hot water in the mornings for shaving. . . . We are at work all day long, much on this wise: 6.0 A.M. Réveillé. 7.0 A.M. Parade for Squad Drill under Sergeant Instructors. 8.0 A.M. Breakfast. 9.15 A.M. Lecture. 10.0 A.M. Squad Drill. 11.5 A.M. Parade under Officer commanding Company. 12.10 P.M. Musketry Instruction (i.e. how to aim, load, etc.—no firing yet). 1.0 P.M. Lunch. 2.0 P.M. Visual Training

¹ S. L. Reiss, Commoner of Balliol, Lieut. Royal Berkshire Regt., killed in action at Loos, October 13, 1915.

² A. G. Heath, Fellow of New College, 2nd Lieut. 6th Royal West Kent Regt.; killed in action at Loos, October 8, 1915.

(i.e. judging distance, etc.). 3.30 P.M. Parade under Company Officer. 5 P.M. Tea. 7.30 P.M. Dinner. 8.30 P.M. Lecture. Sundry informal things, e.g. Revolver Practice, happen between tea and dinner, or we have Night Operations at 6.30, in which case the lecture is at 8.30. In addition, we have of course to study the Drill Books, Manuals, etc., and to take notes on the lectures (which are admirable). So we are enjoying a slack week-end. Our last parade was 2 P.M. yesterday. To-day there is a voluntary Church Parade for those who have uniform, and possibly this afternoon a tactical tour, which means a walk with some instruction on where to put trenches, artillery, machine guns, and reserves, and is very interesting. We had an informal early service this morning, and I shall try and get over to Ilsley this evening for service if possible. In addition I must make up a few notes on the work of the week, with a view to instructing my own Platoon on similar (though not quite such strenuous) lines. . . . Nobody has any doubt about the Russians,¹ and many have positive evidence. The military men seem to think the war will lengthen out now, and that we shall certainly see service, I hope, not in Egypt. Of course we are all burning to get to France. As our Regiment has suffered severely, it is possible we may get a chance sooner than some others. . . .

To Mr. Hubert Secretan (an old Balliol man)—

Officers' Training Camp, Churn, Didcot. [End of August.]— . . . You may be interested to hear about life here. We work all day at Squad Drill with and without arms (most trying), Platoon and Company Drill, Musketry and Visual Training, Open Order Drill and Outposts, Defensive Positions, etc. We also have two lectures per day, one on such operations as taking out a draft to the front (very like taking the Boys' Club to camp, but far worse), and the other on some tactical question. These are remarkably well done, are very short, and most interesting. We are to be orally examined in all the drill

¹ The rumour that a large Russian force had landed in Great Britain *en route* to France was spread by word of mouth all over England during August, long before it got into the papers, and, though it proved false, it was apparently attested by better and more various evidence, direct and indirect, than many events in ancient history.

movements, etc., before we leave, and no one will be sent to his regiment without a certificate of efficiency from the Colonel and his Company Officer. Next week, probably on Saturday, we are all to be inoculated for enteric, which means an unpleasant week-end. We leave, if all goes well, on September 26, so I fear (and yet hope) I shall be gone before you come up next term. . . . I don't know what will happen to the Club, but perhaps something can be devised. Stephen [Reiss] is in capital form; he has passed his first exam. in Squad Drill: mine is on Wednesday. . . .

To his father—

O.T.C. Camp, Churn, Didcot, September 8.— . . . Those of our Company who were uniformed were examined to-day; but as mine has not yet come, I was unable to appear. The same applies to at least half the Company. Several people are being demanded by their regiments before their training month is complete, and these are being hastily rushed through; but so far the R.W. Kent has, I believe, not demanded us. The demand is of course due to the present dearth of competent drill sergeants. Apparently we may be inoculated on Friday, and sent home till Monday, but all is very vague: anyhow I don't think I'll go to church in uniform! We are gradually getting to more interesting work than mere squad drill, and the lectures are thrilling, and extraordinarily well done. The Colonel cannot at present get any pay for us, or find how to get it!

To his mother—

Churn Camp, Didcot, September 15.—I should have written yesterday to say that I got back all right, but we had a terrific gale, and part of our large marquees were blown down, so there was nowhere comfortable to sit and great desolation around. . . . Yesterday a good many people were quite bad [after inoculation] and we were all rather listless. . . . Those who are to go on Thursday have been selected, and I am not among them. . . . But as the orders from the War Office change daily, we never know our luck. . . . Of course those who have not been selected think the selections ridiculous; but there

can be no doubt that the method of selection has been most haphazard, if not unjust. . . .

To Mr. Cyril Bailey—

6th Battalion Royal West Kent Regt., Purfleet Camp, Essex. Thursday, September 17.— . . . I left Churn on Friday and arrived here on Monday. This is a horrible site, being only redeemed from utter desolation by the river, which flows past 200 yards away or so the other side of a vast dyke over which we see sails and funnels gliding by. There is of course a horrible wet mist in the mornings, which later on, we are told, will last the whole day. But we hope to move to Shorncliffe about the end of the month. On arrival, I was given a platoon of fifty-eight, and told I should have a free hand with it: which is pleasant in one way, but rather alarming in another. The men are very well advanced on the whole, and the Regular officers are surprised at the speed with which they have learned. But the first enthusiasm has to some extent worn off, and they are rather stale. We work fairly hard, not as much as at Churn, but we start at 6 A.M. and consequently Réveillé is at 5, which is a chilly hour. The N.C.O.'s are a mixed lot: most of them have some service before, and some are fairly good.

. . . I must stop, as I have to go and be instructed in musketry—by a civilian!—and learn over again what I was doing every day at Churn and what I have been teaching my men all the morning.

To his mother—

6th Royal West Kent, Purfleet, October 7.—I had an amusing job on Monday, being sent off to Croydon to appear in the Police Court at 10 A.M. A fellow arrested for begging there admitted that he was one of our deserters, and I had to appear as a witness to prove character. The man had been limping round for three weeks, saying that he had been discharged after being wounded at Mons and was starving. As a matter of fact he enlisted on August 25, and was a thoroughly worthless fellow. They remanded the case for a week in order to bring it up under a more severe form, viz. by accusing him of making fraudulent use of H.M.'s uniform to collect money. . . . The police

informed me that they were most grateful to Kitchener's Army for having cleared several of Croydon's worst streets of all their terrors !

To his mother—

6th Royal West Kent Regt., Purfleet Camp, October 15.
— . . . I shall spend this afternoon walking about the country preparing a few schemes for the week. There is some quite good country for training ground a mile or so inland, but it isn't much good taking out the platoon unless you have something prepared for them, as we have no mecometers [*μῆκος μέτρον*] or other range-finders, and have to pace all distances for accuracy. I have started a little class of four lance-corporals and four smart privates to be trained as scouts, and take them in odd half-hours on the compass, map-reading, and field sketching. . . . We did some very amusing night operations on Friday which I think they all enjoyed. We have been firing on the miniature range this week. . . . [Next week] I expect to spend much of my days sitting in the butts marking for other companies—a first experience under fire. . . . We go to Sandling probably on November 10 ! —a good birthday treat.

However, he spent his twenty-first birthday at home.

To Mr. Cyril Bailey—

Purfleet Camp, Essex, October 27.— . . . Things are brightening up considerably down here, and we are getting on quite fast. Just at present we are on the range all day. We go out at 7.45; and I lie on a firing-point for five-and-a-half hours or so saying the same thing to each man as he comes up to shoot. At the end of it one is numb with cold and very deaf. Then there are two more hours of it in the afternoon: so that by evening one feels very stupid. However, the men are shooting well on the whole, except for one or two hopeless cases, who will never learn anything. We shall be on at this work all the week, and then I shall have to spend next week in the butts marking for another company. The men are extraordinarily nervous, in many cases, of firing ball ammunition, and one of my beauties the other day actually broke down and wept after firing

two rounds, simply out of sheer terror: this, however, is mainly due to excessive cigarette smoking. In a fortnight's time we move to Sandling and start company training in real earnest.

To his mother—

6th R.W. Kent, Purfleet Camp, Essex, December 1.
— . . . Yesterday afternoon, when all was packed up and ready, we got a wire to say 'Move cancelled.' Less than half our huts are finished! It was a very wet day, and everything was soaked; so in the evening there was a Mutiny. Details are not very clear, but apparently a few men in one Company (not ours!) went round and tried to stir up the whole battalion to revolt. However, the Colonel was prompt, marched out the whole lot of us to the Battalion Parade Ground and addressed us some stirring words. So the incident passed off, but it was a bit awkward. The men had a terrible night, as all the tents leaked very badly, and the tea was very inadequate as the rain ruined the fires. This morning was fine, and the condition of camp being simply indescribable, inches deep in black, sloppy mud and stinking fearfully, we shifted the whole camp bodily to a new grass pitch further up the range. This is a very great improvement and also kept them busy. . . . Their friends in the 7th Battalion are in beautiful huts just up the hill, with plenty of room and straw mattresses; while they rot out here in the mud. However, there has been very little sickness, and practically nothing serious.

To his mother—

6th R.W. Kent Regt., Stone Farm, Sandling Junction, December 13.—We have had the most appallingly wet week I have ever known. . . . The huts leak all over, and the men are scarcely drier than at Purfleet: of course they have fires and generally more room to sit about than in tents, and are really better off; but the state of things is really very bad. Our own sleeping huts are fortunately waterproof. . . . We now have to attend Divisional Lectures at Shorncliffe, four miles away, two evenings a week; they are very interesting and one meets several old friends from Churn there. . . . On Friday we dug

some capital trenches, but when on Saturday I took my platoon up to finish them off neatly, there was from one to two feet of water in them. However, we borrowed buckets and baled them out, and managed to finish them.

Saumarez spent Christmas at home. He writes on January 2, 1915, from Hythe, that the men of the 6th Battalion were billeted in the town, the officers billeted at Sandy Hatch—‘a most lovely house on the cliff just behind the railway station the only objection to it is that it is twenty-five minutes walk to the platoon from here. We are five . . . and a very pleasant party.’

He writes to his mother from Sandy Hatch on January 7: ‘By the way don’t be surprised, should a raid come, if you don’t hear from me for some time. We are making all sorts of secret preparations and shall disappear completely for a time—in other words, there’ll be an awful muddle. . . .’

To his father—

January 10.—We have all sorts of secret mobilization orders on now in case of a raid, and we are greatly afraid they will be put to the test one day next week: in which case there will be an awful muddle, and I shall be unable to come. . . .

. . . We have had some excitement this week with some reported signalling. Matthews¹ and I turned out two nights to watch the house concerned, and I must say very queer things happened, but we have not yet raided it. We have been under inspection the last two days—rather nerve-racking work, but no deserters so far.

To his mother—

Sandy Hatch, Hythe, January 20.—We have had three very strenuous days’ training and I am completely exhausted after it all. . . . On Monday . . . we got up to the top of the hill about 8.45 (P.M.) and had the awful task of taking over tools and finding our work in the very dark night. However, we got to work somehow, and went on hard till 11.45, when we knocked off, as it

¹ M. L. Matthews, B.A., Univ. Coll., Capt. 6th Royal West Kents; killed in action on the Somme, July 6, 1916.

was a very cold night and the General had told us we might. We had the awful task of getting down the hill with one rifle and two tools to each man and got back about 1.30 A.M. Digging in the dark is very trying work, as you can never be quite sure what your tools will bring up next. On the following (or rather the same) morning we paraded at 9 A.M., went up again, finished up the trenches as far as possible, and manned them, getting back about 2.30 P.M. Then there was paying of billets, etc., and to-day, after being out doing an attack all the morning, we had to go up again this afternoon to fill the old trenches in. On paper this perhaps doesn't look very much, but when you add the work that has to be done in connexion with the details of the platoon, such as paying for billets, washing, etc., it comes to a good deal of walking about. . . . On Tuesday morning the Divisional General came up and congratulated us on the excellence of our digging, which was satisfactory.

The battalion, with others, in all 6000 men, marched from Hythe to Aldershot in February, reaching Ashford the 22nd, Rolvenden 23rd, and passing through Goudhurst, Tunbridge Wells, and East Grinstead to Horsham—where Saumarez's parents witnessed its entry into the town and met their son—and Godalming. Between East Grinstead and Horsham the column was inspected by Earl Kitchener. It arrived at Albuera Barracks, Aldershot, on March 1.

On March 7 Saumarez writes to his mother: 'We have now got packs and new rifles, the officers wearing the former just like the men. [They were going into billets at Finchampstead. The King was at Aldershot.] . . . I have had to stay in all day as Orderly Officer and could not even leave barracks to go to Church. I had to parade no less than seven different Church parties of various denominations.'

To his mother—

Bannisters, Finchampstead, Berks, March 12.—
 . . . I am in a most delightful old house with some charming people here, and most comfortable. I only wish the men were equally so. . . . We marched past the King on Monday on our way here, but were spared an inspection. . . .

To his mother—

Albuera Barracks, Aldershot, March 22.— . . . This morning we had to get up at 5.30 A.M. and be on the range by 7.30. I was there till 1 P.M. and didn't get back here till 2, as it is about four miles. . . . All our men were medically examined for the front last week, and we managed to get rid of practically all the rotters—for Home service!

To his mother—

April 2.— . . . I have been doing a two days' course of bomb-throwing and demolitions, so we made bombs out of jam tins and threw them from a trench, and they exploded with tremendous noise. It was great fun, and we are now waiting eagerly for explosives, in order to instruct selected men in the making of these delightful toys.

To Mrs. Herapath (his aunt)—

Albuera Barracks, Aldershot, March 26.—All the parcels have arrived safely and thank you very much for them. . . . I am afraid you must think me very rude to be so slow in acknowledging these things; but we have been moved about so much lately that anything except the immediate present vanishes from one's mind. We are now firing our trained soldiers' course, and spending long and very chilly days on the range. I have to go on the butts most days, marking for other people—a dreary performance. We are interrupting our course to-morrow for a great field day, which Kitchener is reported to be attending—two Divisions against two: I expect this will mean much standing about, but it is a change. Next Wednesday we are going out for thirty-six hours: I hope it will not be a cold night. So you see we are finishing up, and I don't think it will be long now before we go. The result of all this energy is that we have to fire on Sunday in order to make up for lost time. The men and ourselves were all medically examined the other day, and I have got rid of practically all my rotters for 'Home Service,' which is very satisfactory. I have also a new Sergeant, who was out with our 1st Battalion for the first two months, and

then got wounded in the head. He is now quite recovered, and is a tremendous acquisition. Measles has now broken out here, but fortunately not very seriously as yet. About half our men have been moved into tents to lessen the overcrowding. I don't think they will appreciate it these cold nights.

He was in barracks at Aldershot (with a short spell of camp) through March, April, and May, with an occasional visit to Oxford or elsewhere. His people came down on Saturday, May 22, and again on May 29, and the Battalion went abroad June 1, 1915.

To his mother—

The Officers' Club, Aldershot, May 31.—We leave to-morrow evening after ten, and cross from Folkestone to Boulogne in the small hours. The transport went off at 8 A.M. to-day amid tremendous applause; and our regular N.C.O.'s who saw the 1st Battalion leave are very impressed with the difference between the long faces on that occasion and the universal joy on this. But then the 1st had not had three months of Hartford Bridge Flats. The transport goes by Southampton-Havre, and until it turns up again about Saturday we are entirely without baggage, except what we can carry. I have no blanket even for to-night; but it is really possible to get quite comfortable with a heavy waterproof sheet and a fleece lining. The Third Army has been marching in all day at intervals: it is very funny to see them coming as we came on March 1, thinking they are only here for three weeks or a month at the most. They will be lucky to be out of here by the end of August, by which time they will be really thankful that it's all over with training, and will know what hard work is. We are incredibly delighted to have finished that, and of course the men treat the move as a regular holiday. When told that if they were absent without leave over in France they would be shot, they positively laughed with delight. . . .

CHAPTER III

ON THE WESTERN FRONT AND AFTERWARDS, JUNE 1915 TO
MAY 1916

To his mother—

*June 2, 1915, 1 p.m. Somewhere [Boulogne]*¹.—We are now allowed to write uncensored letters, provided we mention no names or probable movements. So I can tell you about the journey, but as regards the rest am of course on my honour. We got off about 9 P.M. and got on to the boat at 12.30 A.M. We had a most beautiful passage and were in dock about 2.15; a destroyer on either side made us feel quite safe. Then we marched up to the rest camp on top of a most horrible hill two miles long, and turned into tents about 4 A.M. It is a beautiful morning, and we are having a complete slack, which is most pleasant. We shall move out of here to-morrow to a place of which you have often heard, a good many miles from the firing line, where we shall find the transport again, and rest for an indefinite period. The men are all very pleased with themselves and happy at having really got out here. But one's packs are horribly heavy, and will have to be drastically reduced.

To his father—

6th R.W. Kent Regt., 37th Bde., 12th Division, B.E.F., June 6.— . . . We have moved up from the rest camp, and are now billeted in a little village right in the heart of the country, just out of reach of the guns. All our lot is in two of those rambling old farms so characteristic of the country-side. The latter is looking very pretty, with the dog roses all out and the May looking its best. The farms are fairly comfortable, but remarkably dirty and

¹ The places from which the letters are written are, of course, not mentioned in them till after the Armistice. They cannot all be identified with certainty.

smelly ; however, the straw is clean, and we shall not be here for ever. . . . The men take a very cheerful view of active service as experienced so far, mainly on account of the fact that they are getting a good deal more to eat than at home. They also take a very rosy view of their own abilities in conversation, though four or five words are about their limit. They all appeal for 'fags,' and, if you are feeling generous at any time, you might enclose a dozen or so packets of Gold Flakes, or Woodbines. It is incredibly hot here to-day, and I've not been asleep since yesterday afternoon, but feel amazingly fit. There is a very fine river here, in which we propose to bathe very soon. . . . I am keeping a diary, but am not allowed to mention names even in that till a fortnight after the events recorded, so I fear I may forget all the details, but will do my best to be descriptive within the strict limits.

[The diary was lost.]

To his mother—

June 7.—We are now in permanent billets about eight miles behind the trenches, quite near a town similar in name to the College of Cyril, Slig, Neville, and myself.¹ The only signs of war are the distinct rumbling of the guns, and long strings of motor lorries, and last evening we saw aeroplanes being shelled, a most beautiful sight. This village² was held by the Germans in October for eight days, and there were twenty-seven of them in this house, but they did not do much damage, and fell back without shelling the place. Those who were actually in this house were well kept in hand by two good officers, and did no harm ; but in other houses it seems to have been very different. During the last two days we have had two terrific marches ; only about thirty miles altogether, but the weather is so frightfully hot, and the packs so very heavy, that it has been very trying. On Wednesday night we bivouacked, which is much the pleasantest form of rest, as there is so little running about to do. Now my men are all in a loft, which is not too clean, but better than many. Harris and I are in a tiny little room together, I sleeping on the

¹ Mr. Cyril Bailey, Mr. F. F. Urquhart, and the Rev. Neville Talbot, the last-named now Bishop of Pretoria.

² Meteren.

floor ; but the people of the house, a young married couple with a small baby, are very kind and hospitable. . . . We have of course no idea when we shall go into the trenches, but at present there is nothing doing up there. . . .

To his father—

6th R.W. Kent Regt., June 10.—We are still in the same place, and are having a complete slack, which is not unwelcome in this heat, but personally I should like to get a little closer up to the fighting. I will try and describe this place to you and tell you what our life is like. The town [Meteren] is a typical [one] of this part ; broad cobbled streets, with a very good fifteenth-century Church, and some fairly old houses. The inhabitants seem prosperous and doing well out of the British soldier, and the country is simply covered with splendid crops to a remarkable degree of intensive cultivation. The only signs of the war, apart from the graves of some hundreds of British troops who were caught in a trap here on October 13, are a single ruined house and a good many bullet and shell marks on walls and trees. The inhabitants have a good deal of interesting information about the Germans, who seem to have been held in hand here, and in some cases seem to have paid for what they took. A large warehouse opposite, full of local dairy produce, held 100 men and twenty-four horses, while the inhabitants, a very stout prosperous old lady and her family, were given the cellar floor to lie upon, and had to spend the day pouring out beer for the men. I have twice ascended the church tower, whence we get a good view, and can even see on a clear day as far as the famous manufacturing town of [Lille], now in the German hands, twenty miles away. But the weather has been too hot and thundery for very clear views. Cars and lorries are constantly rushing through backwards and forwards, and the streets are lined with an enormous string of the latter, with their drivers cooking, eating, and sleeping in the road just beside them ; so it is a busy scene. As regards ourselves, we get up about 6.30, do a short parade, and then have breakfast. Our mess consists only of our own Company officers, six in number, each company being on its own, and we mess in a room in Major P.'s billet. We have our own cook, and a couple of

large mess baskets containing cutlery, etc., and also food to supplement the rations, and we buy lots of eggs, lettuce, bread, etc., and live very well indeed. Then we rest in the morning, as it is very hot, and there is nothing particular to do; we get newspapers only one day late, so there is plenty of interest. About 2 P.M. my sergeant brings round the letters for censoring, and I have an amusing half-hour or more. . . . After tea we begin to wake up, and the post comes in from home, and there is often a job to be done. We dine about 8 and go to bed by 10 P.M. It sounds very lazy, doesn't it? but of course it is only for a short time, at least I hope so. I have three times been round to see the curé to ask him if it is 'permissible de jouer aux orgues,' but have not yet found him at home. . . . I'm getting quite fluent, and in fact feel quite at my ease in the language now. . . . The landlady of the billet where we mess has a most interesting letter in rather crude French, written by one of the German officers billeted here last October, defending the German cause and the shelling of Rheims. It is a charming letter and most sincere: he seems to have been very friendly with her. . . .

To his mother—

[*Same Place*] *June 14.*— . . . I had a most delightful outing yesterday, just like our travels in Normandy and Brittany. I got a lift in a car into the large manufacturing town [Armentières], round which the line bends like a horseshoe, so that there is fighting on each side of it. It is a fine town, and has been shelled a fair amount, and is still occasionally, so that it wears a very deserted appearance, though all the shops are open, and very good shops they are too. All the cellars have gratings looking out on the street, and each of these is blocked up with sandbags, so as to be safe when the place is next shelled. We got an excellent lunch at a hotel¹ which specializes for English officers: they gave us soup, mutton cutlets and new potatoes, roast beef and new potatoes, an omelette *aux fines herbes*, and strawberries, for 3 fr. a head. This

¹ 'Au Bœuf,' mentioned later. It was completely destroyed by a shell in 1916.

in a town cut off from railway supplies almost entirely, and liable to be shelled at any moment, is not bad, is it ? Then we walked round, not very near to the trenches, I must admit, for one isn't allowed up there, but among our own guns, which were firing over our heads, all the time, and making a tremendous noise. We saw a British aeroplane brought down by German shrapnel, a fascinating though horrible sight, as it dropped like a stone. Then we wandered around and eventually got a lift back in a lorry. The noises made by the various shells were most interesting; but none came back in our direction from the Germans. This morning we had a Church parade in a field, and I hope to go out to a hill this afternoon from which one might get a view. I did not get leave to *jouer aux orgues* ; in fact the curé was horrified. . . .

To his sister—

June 16.— . . . We have made some most interesting discoveries about the lady in whose house we mess. She is the daughter of a very celebrated artist, Pierre de Coninck, who was born here. He died in 1910. The house is full of his works, some of them remarkably fine, especially when he imitates the old Flemish school ; and Madame herself is a very good drawer, and is making a most spirited black and white study of the English charging up the street of this village, and the Huns fleeing before them. She is a most charming and accomplished lady, devoted to music, and quite enraptured with Heath's playing, and she has quite a museum of 'bonbons' in the form of shrapnel and other bullets, shells, and German helmets. . . . She has a very small walled garden, filled—in fact crammed—with magnificent roses and every kind of flower, fruit, and vegetable that you can imagine. She is tremendously proud of it, and it really looks beautiful. But everything grows splendidly in this country, and really the crops are magnificent ; every inch of the ground cultivated. In fact there is only one not very large field where we dare to do any drill at all, and that for the whole battalion is not very much, which explains why we do so little work just now. Another reason is that work is not allowed in the middle of the day ; and the same General, who at Aldershot would have been furious that anyone

should wish to rest in the middle of the day, gave X. the full fury of his tongue because he found him exercising his platoon at 11 A.M. Thus we live and learn. . . .

To Mr. Cyril Bailey—

6th R.W. Kent Regt., 37th Inf. Bde., 12th Division, B.E.F., June 18.— . . . We have been here [at Meteren] now for almost a fortnight, and have done nothing except to lie and sleep in the sun, with an occasional walk into the town to wash ourselves in tubs of hot water, or around the country-side just to keep ourselves fit. As we are a good ten miles behind the trenches, the most there is to remind us of the war is the distinct and very soothing rumble of the guns, and an occasional outburst of shelling at aeroplanes: in fact we saw one (of our own) brought down the other day. We climb to the top of the church tower, whereon last October two German officers were serving a machine gun when some of the Warwickshires rushed up and threw them over the edge, and survey miles of very rich flat country, but there is never anything doing: and the men have not had such a holiday since they joined. As far as we can say, we shall be here for three years or the duration. . . . We do of course a few parades; but the country is so thoroughly cultivated, every inch of it, that there are no fields to train in at all. . . .

To his father—

June 18.— . . . We have all been into the neighbouring town to-day to have hot baths. You will have read in the papers descriptions of these; old sheds filled up with huge wooden tubs and ample hot water, with cold showers to finish up with. This particular one, allotted to our corps, can put through two officers and fifty-five men every twenty minutes, and is occupied every day from morning to night; so you see we can get a bath every week as long as we are in this neighbourhood. We get yesterday's papers in every morning about 8 A.M., so we are really very civilized; and there is a cricket match most evenings played with rather scanty tackle belonging to the A.S.C., who brought it out in their lorries. The pitch is not of the best, being remarkably bumpy. . . .

To his mother (from near Fleurbaix, S. of Armentières)—

June 23.— . . . We left the last place on Sunday at 5 A.M. and marched here into bivouac about $2\frac{1}{2}$ miles behind the line. On the same evening at 8 P.M. I went up with Heath and Towse¹ into the trenches and stayed there, being instructed for forty-eight hours, coming out about 9 P.M. last night. So you see I have been at it now at last. I must say it was great fun ; I never enjoyed anything more. This bit of the front is very quiet indeed, hardly ever shelled, and the Germans are about 300 to 500 yards away, so it is very safe. On Monday night the men came in and were scattered among the regulars in these trenches, for instruction only, so this gave them some idea of it. These trenches are extraordinarily comfortable, with large dugouts for the officers' messes and small ones to sleep in, and one can walk about behind quite freely. They live very well on food bought in the neighbourhood, and entertained us royally, with gramophones, etc., and they have dogs up there as pets, and quite good gardens with roses and nasturtiums in them. This particular regiment has occupied these trenches since January, hence all these comforts, and, but for the monotony of it, would be really very happy this dry weather. Of course one has to keep one's clothes on all night, and is up most of it, as that is the most active time ; but by day one could sleep on *ad infin.*, as there is simply nothing doing. My periscope is most useful, as there is no looking over the top of the parapet. The Hun snipers are amazingly good, and always on the lookout. But the night is the real fun, when there are always patrols and working parties out. Curiously enough the first officer I met up there was a Balliol man. . . .

To Miss Ranken (from near Ploegsteert)—

Sunday, June 27.— . . . We are now in the fair land of Belgium, not very far from our last abode. We are about a mile behind the line, but there is a wood between, so we are not much troubled except by shells,

¹ Captain C. F. Towse, killed at Vermelles, November 8, 1915. These trenches were at Bois-Grenier.

which don't often hit this particular farm. In any case no one worries much about it, because, though you can hear the things coming through the air at you for two seconds or so, you never can tell where they'll come, so it's no good running. Anyway it's extraordinary how little damage they do. We have great fun watching aircraft being shelled; about 200 shells at least must have been used up by both sides on four of them yesterday without the slightest effect. At present we are billeted in a good-sized farm, one of those three-sided affairs, with a courtyard and cesspit in the middle. We live in three rooms in the centre, while the inhabitants are in the rest, and all the men are in the great barns and lofts on either side of the courtyard. Of course such a place requires a deal of cleaning, but by the use of much chloride of lime and elbow-grease we are getting on well. Of course one comes into these places in the dark, and it is not very pleasant if they are filthy. The first night we got in here it had been raining all day, and the roads were very wet and muddy, so when we got in the men were tired, but about 10.30 P.M. I had to turn out a party to haul two wagons out of a bog into which they had got completely stuck, and would be shelled by daylight. We got them out all right, but got pretty muddy at it; and had to turn out at 5.30 next morning to carry loads to the trenches. In fact our main job here for a day or two is to carry up other people's stuff for them at any hour of the day or night; and then we go up to the trenches and they come down here to do the same for us. We had a sad accident yesterday: one of our signallers was bathing in a pond when he got into difficulties and sank, whereupon another fellow dived in with all his clothes on and got stuck in the mud at the bottom, and both were drowned. It seems such bad luck: however, they had been in action, so it is better than if it had happened at home.

To his father—

June 28 (after a second twenty-four hours of the trenches).
 — . . . Now we have finished the instructional period, and are off to-night to take over a bit of the line all on our own, which is more satisfactory, though of course

the trenches are not likely to be quite so palatial anywhere else. . . . Our quiet and peaceful existence here has been rather spoilt by rain, which is the more unwelcome as we are in open bivouacs, though the crops seem all the better for it. . . .

To his mother—

June 29.— . . . I wonder if you could send me some material for a bomb-throwing catapult—to wit, four yards of the very best catapult elastic, and a strong spiral spring about one inch in diameter, and a foot to eighteen inches in length. With these I can make two quite nice little engines for the two different bombs used out here, and as the trenches to which we are going to-morrow are very close indeed to the wily Hun, they would be useful. . . . Everybody is very fit, and there is absolutely no illness whatever, and the men have realized that it's not a bit like what the newspapers say, nor half as bad as they expected. It is very much of a picnic most of the time. Comic relief is provided by an occasional spy hunt—not generally very successful.

The result was a hunt for spiral springs and best rubber in various obscure places in London. The spring could only be made to order to a more exact specification, and the inquiry for rubber produced only a rectangular kind—the proper round kind being all taken up for Government contracts for bomb-throwing catapults, which instruments, with the innocent frankness characteristic of Britons during the early days of the war, were freely exhibited to the inquirer.

To his mother—

July 4.—Tell Papa I was much interested in his researches into bomb-throwing: we have some of those catapults out here, but they always go wrong: perhaps this is a new pattern. . . . The spiral spring was for throwing stick bombs, which I don't expect you have ever seen, but I didn't expect much of it, and it certainly isn't worth having one made. . . .

I put in two days in the trenches [at Ploegsteert] and things were pretty lively; we had several men hit,

but fortunately none killed. No sooner had we got in than they blew up a mine just by the fire-trench; but fortunately it was short and didn't do much harm. Still, it was a lively beginning, as they of course turned on all their machine guns at once in the hope that we should all look over the top to see what was happening. My platoon was a safe distance off, and it was a remarkable sight.

He had been sent to headquarters, after two days in the trenches, with a severe attack of gastritis—'a great nuisance, very painful for me, and making more work for the others.' However, he was much better, and on July 7 wrote that he had quite recovered.

To his mother—

July 7.— . . . Don't you believe a word of the rot you see in the papers about lives being wasted because of a lack of shells; our artillery at present is firing two or three for every one of theirs. Nor should I advise you to look for any breaking through very soon. Most people think that when the war ends the two lines will be within ten miles of where they are at present. I might briefly describe a day in the trenches. We breakfast about 7 A.M. and wash and shave, take a look round our trench and see what work we will do in the daytime. The men don't start work before 11 A.M., but of course we are always busy. From 11 to 1 we work hard digging, filling and carrying sandbags, etc.; and sometimes also in the afternoon, but not more than necessary. About 8.30 P.M. we 'stand-to' for an hour, which means that everybody is wideawake and fully equipped, and no working parties are allowed. Then we get on with the night's work; this is either digging, etc., which can't be done in the daytime, or else one takes out patrols to have a look at the wire, or cut the grass, now very long in front of the parapet. Of course there is continuous firing all night from both sides, and the Germans send up star lights all the time, so work does not proceed so quickly as at normal times; of course if there is thought to be anything in the wind, working parties are hastily withdrawn. We stand-to again for an hour at dawn, then have

a hot drink, and about 3.30 A.M. turn in unless on duty. But one gets eight hours on duty in twenty-four, during which we are supposed to go round the trenches every hour, and there are constant alarms all day as well, so one is kept busy. The periscope is a most valuable possession and greatly envied.

To his mother (from Oosthove, near Ploegsteert)—

July 11.— . . . We are at work again; left billets yesterday morning and proceeded to this farm, where the whole battalion is billeted together. We do fatigues by day and night, mostly digging up in the firing line, and generally live strenuously, sleeping in our boots, etc., though far back from the trenches. The trenches we shall go to this time [Le Touquet] are a great improvement on the last, and are exceedingly comfortable, though a bit close to the Hun. No, we have not been in any serious fighting yet; all that has been up near Ypres. . . . I was bringing a digging party back yesterday afternoon, when they started shelling some guns just near us. It is most alarming being shelled in the open, as one has nowhere to go to, and of course no idea of where the next one will fall. When in the trenches very little notice is taken of any shelling except that by the heaviest high explosives, as unless you are hit you are practically safe. But in the open it's no joke. However, the bits just missed us, and we walked safely on. I must say the men treat all these things, in fact we all do, as an excellent joke; and the Germans display the same humour. The other day our guns were shelling them a bit, and not very successfully, whereupon the Germans started a derisive cheering as each shell came over and burst harmlessly, or failed to burst. Of course at night one's nerves get slightly on edge, especially if you are working in new trenches and don't know how near the Hun is or how much he can see of you. But, taken all round, I should imagine it's the least alarming kind of warfare imaginable. . . .

To his mother (from Oosthove)—

July 15.— . . . We are in a large chateau farm, but as the whole battalion is together most of us have to bivouac. Each twenty-four hours we send up twenty

officers and about 700 men to work on a new line of trenches which they want finished, and it is pretty hard work. First of all there is $2\frac{1}{2}$ miles of road through a village which is shelled every day, but we have had no one hit yet there. Then there is about $1\frac{1}{2}$ miles of communication trench, along which one goes stumbling over wires and loose planks until finally one gets into the workings, where the Royal Engineers place the men and allot the work. Then we put in about three hours' work, and then comes the fearful task of collecting the men, who may be scattered in separate workings over 100 yards or more, and checking them to make sure that none have been left behind. The whole job is about seven hours by night or six by day, but of course one does about twice as much work by day as by night, only unfortunately a good deal of the work, especially on the parapets, can only be done at night. However, I must say the men have been very good about it—possibly because they are so busy on the same job just opposite us, and our total casualties so far are one man shot through the wrist and one with a grazed finger, the bullet having splintered the handle of his shovel—and this though we have several times been shelled, and have been working within 100 yards of them in places. So you see it's not as dangerous as you might think. But last night we had a perfectly appalling time—real winter conditions. We started out in pouring rain at 7.45, struggled along in the blackest darkness I've ever seen, fell about in several inches of water in communication trenches so dark that the corners were not visible till they hit one in the eye, and eventually got the men (250) all at work about 11.30 P.M. Not much work was possible, as the ground was fearfully heavy, and there were several inches of slush in the trenches, while outside the grass, or rather corn, was about two feet high. We cleared out about 12.30, having done practically nothing, and soaked to the skin. We got back here at 2.30 A.M. to find our bivouac with several inches of water inside, so that the dry greatcoats inside were partly useless. However, fortunately it is a beautiful day to-day with sun and wind, so we shall soon be dry. To-night will be our last night digging, as we go to the

trenches to-morrow, which will be a great blessing, as we are about tired of night digging. I must say the men took it very cheerfully. You wouldn't believe the consistency of Flanders mud, after even a few hours' rain. . . .

We had a tremendous alarm the other night: from about 9 to 9.30 there was a terrific fusillade of rifles, machine guns, and bombs from both sides along the four miles or so of front which we can see from here. Nobody seems to know what the cause of it was, and apparently not a single man was hit; the Germans sent up countless red and green rockets, and the whole sky was bright with flares; but it all died away as suddenly as it started, and we went to bed in peace. It happened to be the one night on which we had a respite from digging, having been at it all day. I am absolutely fit again now and enjoy myself thoroughly; in fact, I think I was the only one that really enjoyed last night. I had so much chocolate that I was able to give every man in my platoon that had been at digging practically a whole stick, which cheered them up a bit.

To his mother—

Trenches, July 21.— . . . We are at one point about thirty yards from the Huns, and can, of course, hear them talking quite plainly; so Heath is thinking of doing a short crawl to listen to the dialect. The other day we heard a man shout 'Ach Himmel,' so hope he was hit. One is getting very bloodthirsty, and my recreation is to lie in wait with a sniping rifle (fired for safety from the bottom of the trench) for Huns who are busy on working parties not fifty yards off in broad daylight. Their shooting is simply marvellous; they nail our periscopes with great regularity, so that it's almost a sure thing if you look over the top. We had a man killed that way the other day; he was not thirty yards off, and of course at that range the wound inflicted is horrible beyond description, though as speedy a death as one could wish for. I hope you won't think this gloomy: one gets to regard these things in a very matter-of-fact way. I must say we've been very lucky so far, and hope it will continue. Our policy, of which I told you in my last, of annoying the Hun by constant shooting (as dictated by the General)

is working well, but of course means that we get less rest than ever. We are busy wiring in front, and they are busy grass-cutting; lying out at night one hears both sides hard at work, each putting up flares to see what the other is doing. I have got my bombs going well, and did a little the other day on one of their sniping parties, but without very much success: however, we have a great scheme on for our last night in here. Don't worry yourself about these things: they have to be done to keep the ball rolling and the men alert, and are not more dangerous than anything else. I must say I enjoy the life except when there is a casualty, as there is always something doing and plenty to keep one's mind occupied, so that you forget how ultimately horrible the whole thing is. We are constantly at work improving the trenches, digging wells, keeping flies down, etc., and drawing, and there is no time to brood. . . .

To his father—

July 25.— . . . [Last Sunday evening] I took a lance-corporal and a private with eight bombs and two revolvers, and we crawled out to bomb a house about midway between ourselves and the Germans, in which we knew a sniper was concealed. We crawled out very slowly through our wire and in the long grass, listening every few yards for German working parties, until we came to a low bank which gave us excellent cover about in line with the south end of the house, the sniper being apparently in the north-west corner. (Of course the house is a tumbled mass of ruins.) Well, we lay there for a bit just listening, and, as it seemed all right, I gave the word to throw. Of our eight bombs seven exploded beautifully just about the south-east corner of the house, throwing back lumps of earth all over us. The Germans fired fairly accurately at us, but owing to this very useful little bank we were perfectly safe, and could crawl back absolutely undetected. We were out about 1½ hours, and it was great fun. I must say I was much less nervous than on several occasions when I have been closer to our own lines, as one's mind was, of course, occupied all the time. What makes one nervous is lying still listening in the grass, especially if the men are nervy.

I must say they're extraordinarily good, and those that do come out on these little shows (of course one only takes volunteers) seem to enjoy themselves. I had a splendid pair out bombing with me. The only fly in the ointment was that the sniper was still sniping next day, so we can't have landed anything right into his lair, but it's probably too well concealed to be damaged by anything except a direct hit from the front, as we have turned a machine gun on the house and cut the brickwork away, yet he still goes on sniping. However, we had the satisfaction of knowing that we must have alarmed the Germans, for within the next day or two we discovered, through a periscope, that they had cut the grass right up to the place where we lay. . . .

[He mentions that Lieutenant Heath had been wounded by a shell splinter in the head while in bed in some earth-works just outside the farm, and that he had dressed the wound. 'A trifling wound, but another half-inch would have done the trick.']

. . . We have had a little voluntary service and Holy Communion this morning, the first I have had for six weeks, and it was welcome. I hope you don't think I am getting very gruesome in my letters: it is pure matter-of-factness.

To his mother (from the Le Touquet salient)—

August 1.— . . . We have now been in here four days, living a very peaceful life, and getting fat and lazy in the process. We are in a round fort in process of construction some hundreds of yards behind the firing line. It is a strong place, and work goes on in shifts—twenty hours out of the twenty-four, so that it will soon be completed. Of course there is a Royal Engineer officer in charge here, who directs the work, and we have nothing to do except to look after the men and go on watch in the night. Towse and I live here alone. . . . We get shelled most days, as the Germans know all about this place. . . . Yesterday we had two men hit, but not very badly; usually, however, no harm is done, as the dug-outs are good and the trenches very strong. . . . On the day we came in here [the Germans] put up a notice in English in their trench, where it is about thirty yards

from us, with the words, 'Here we are again, the Saxons,' and then proceeded to throw clods of earth into our trench, hitting one of our officers on the head, thus indicating that they had relieved the more warlike Bavarians—not that the rotund Saxon is any chicken at this game. . . . Our guns gave a great display just opposite here last night, and put in fifteen minutes' heavy bombardment of their front trenches, just to see what it looked like. I don't suppose they were hurt much, as they have excellent dug-outs, and probably don't hold the first line very strongly by day, but it was a marvellous sight. There was a regular wall of dust along their front line, with occasional vivid patches of yellow and thick black smoke. . . . The noise was extraordinary, as a mixture of several entirely different types of sound. . . .

For his parents' silver wedding (August 7) he sent a vase, bought (as was subsequently revealed) at Armentières, 'as a memento of a beleaguered city.' In writing of it, he says (August 3): 'The poor old city gets shelled every day now regularly, I believe, but some shops, including the excellent "Au Bœuf," which reminds me of Avranches, still continue. It is quite like an old summer holiday to go in there. . . .'

In a letter to his sister (August 5), who was on munition work, he mentions that he is again ill and on starvation diet, 'but not nearly so bad as when we were at Plug Street. We have a plague of flies to-day, a new kind altogether, very small and black, and they bite unpleasantly.'

On the night of August 10, though still suffering from trench fever,¹ he took out three volunteers from his platoon on a grass-cutting expedition in the No Man's Land between the two armies (near Frélinghien), and was sniped in both legs. The story is told in a letter to his mother from his friend, Lieutenant A. G. Heath.

¹ A year later he wrote (à propos of a private who sought a discharge on the ground of illness): 'In the trenches a large majority of the men, and almost all the officers, are constantly sick and often quite bad, especially at this time of year; but they go on, although at home, of course, they'd go under treatment. At home, if I'd been in the state I was in on the day I was hit, I should have been in bed for a week, and very, very miserable.'

(*In France*), August 11.— . . . By a great stroke of misfortune your son was wounded last night. He was not dangerously hurt, but he has two nasty wounds in the toes and the leg, and there is compound fracture of the shin bone. I tell you the worst at once, plainly. On the other hand the doctor says that the wound will heal well, his leg will be as strong as ever then, and there is, of course, not the slightest danger to his life. For all these things we are very thankful, but that he should be injured at all is a very great misfortune to us. I don't think anybody in the regiment had more of the true fighting spirit. He was always anxious to 'get on with the war,' and sanguinary engagements, which most of us look forward to at best with resignation, he seemed to expect eagerly. He was almost the only officer in B Company who understood bombs, and possessed far the best topographical sense of us all. So from the cold expert military point of view we lose what the papers would call a great fighting asset. For my own part I feel even more that I am now separated from my best friend in the regiment, and short of his company I shall enjoy the campaign much less than I might, if enjoyment can be spoken of in this process of dreary and cold-blooded murder. I cannot give you any details of the affair, because I was in a different part of the trenches, and could not even get to him before he was sent away in the ambulance. I understand that he was in the front with a party cutting and pulling up grass. He was lying between two men: their first knowledge that he was hit was his saying quietly, 'I'm hit in the leg: get in now as quickly as you can.' However, they waited to bring him in with them, and got him safely over the parapet, though I'm afraid he must have suffered much pain in the process. He is so stoical that they did not think his pain was great, but I'm afraid it must have been keen.¹ He was sent off to hospital, and I expect in a week or two, when the bone has been set, that you will have him in England. The doctor told me this morning that he will be an interesting invalid for three or four months, so perhaps he will be spared the winter campaign.

¹ A brother officer and friend, Lieut. Meyrick Carré (afterwards Capt., M.C.), wrote that he was dragged over the parapet partly by his wounded leg, which must have been agony; 'but he was pretty cheery while we were binding him up, and managed to light a pipe.'

A telegram announcing that he was 'seriously wounded' reached his parents on Saturday afternoon, August 14; on Sunday afternoon another telegram substituted 'dangerously,' chiefly (as was afterwards learnt) because, from his attack of trench fever, it was feared that typhoid would set in. His parents hastened to the War Office and arranged for a pass for his mother—only one relative being allowed to visit him—to start on Monday morning by way of Folkestone and Dieppe, and so save half a day over the usual route via Havre, by which the relatives of patients at Rouen had hitherto been sent. Lieutenant Heath's reassuring letter arrived just before she left, and she reached the hospital (in the former Seminary at Rouen) on Tuesday morning, August 17. Meanwhile, Saumarez had travelled from Bailleul to Rouen for twenty-one hours in a hospital train, his pains deadened by morphia; he was placed on the operating table, and splinters were removed from his wound, but when he was put to bed the bone hemorrhage became so serious that preparations were made for amputation; but the bleeding was overcome. He said afterwards that his chief thought was, 'Now I shall never be able to play the organ again.'

His mother wrote home on arrival :

Hôtel de Dieppe, Rouen, August 17.—I have just come from seeing Saum, who is, thank God, going on splendidly. He was bad on Saturday with internal pain, and so miserable and low that the doctor stretched a point and telegraphed 'dangerously ill'; and ever since he knew I was coming he has begun to get better. I could not get in here last night as, with all the bother about passports, I missed the train at Dieppe, and so had to stay there the night, but I was up soon after 5.30 this morning and caught the 7 A.M. train, getting here about 8.45. I went straight to the hospital, where the Major in charge received me most kindly, and told me at once that Saum was doing well and that he had telegraphed because he thought my coming would do him good. He went to see if Saum were ready to see me, and came back directly and took me in. He is in a large ward in a former Seminary, very comfortable, and screened off from the rest, who are all officers. He looks thin in the face, and he is white from loss

of blood, and his hair is cut very short, but his eyes are bright, and he can talk quite all right, and he told me all about his being wounded. There is a terrible hole in his leg about four inches long, and there is a small tube in it cleaning it, and it will be a long time before it heals.

To Mr. Cyril Bailey—

No. 2 Red Cross Hospital, Rouen, August 25.—I am getting along all right, but shall be a very long time. The wound in the right foot is nothing, just the great toe cut and knocked about, but the bone is unbroken; it is healing up fast. I have an enormous hole, however, in the left leg, about two square inches of bone being shot right away, and the remainder filled with splinters and fragments. These are gradually coming out, but will take a long time yet, and until they are all out of course it's hopeless to talk of its healing. I shall probably not be fit to come to England for another six or eight weeks, but they talk now of sending me to Etretat for the sea air, as I can't sleep here. Otherwise I am very fit in myself. However, I am to be considered lucky, as, had the back part of the bone been broken instead of only cracked, I should have lost the leg. . . . I shall hope to be able to come and see you before the end of next term, as I may be about on crutches in November.

To M. L. Jacks—

No. 2 Red Cross Hospital, Rouen, September 16.— . . . As you say, After the war, Grafton. That place is constantly in my memory, and we think of trying to get your people to let it to us next spring when I am convalescent. I am getting on very well, but of course it's slow and painful. I have a hole in my leg in which you could quite hide a good-sized apple, the bottom lined with jagged bone. There is a good deal of discharge, and the dressing, twice daily, is not pleasant, especially as my nerves have got very jumpy, I suppose, with the constant pain. But that process is going on well, and I can move the leg about a bit, which is a great thing. I can also get out of bed on to a wheel-chair, in which I can get about the hospital, which is a change. I expect to go to England in about a fortnight; my mother returned last

week. To pass the time away I am studying Sanskrit with great energy ; it is most fascinating and very difficult. I think without it I should get the dumps : I miss the old platoon and the officers so horribly. This is rather a moody letter, but I have had a bad time during the last two or three days, and am not very happy.

He had soon become able to spend the day in the quadrangle of the building, his mother sitting by him : and her stay lasted for nearly four weeks, during which she received the utmost kindness and consideration from the hospital staff. In about a fortnight, thanks to admirable medical care and devoted nursing, he was well enough to want some solid reading, and was naturally attracted to Sanskrit by his turn for languages and his studies in classical philology. On September 28 he was sent to England in the hospital ship *St. David* via Havre and Southampton. He was to be sent to a hospital at Farnborough, Hants, but was able to obtain a transfer to Somerville College, Oxford.

His father visited him on October 1, the day after his arrival : both parents for the week-end October 11-13 ; and he had a host of other visitors of both sexes as soon as Term began. He went on with Sanskrit with the kind help of the Boden Professor ; friends lent him books ; and he lay out all day in the College garden, reading, writing verse, or seeing his friends, the Master of his College (Mr. J. L. Strachan-Davidson), Mr. Cyril Bailey, Mr. F. F. Urquhart, Professor Gilbert Murray, and other senior members of the University—his undergraduate friends being at the front or on war service at home—and members of the Boys' Club. His uncle went round every day from Merton to see how he progressed : his friends showered gifts upon him, of fruit, eggs, flowers, and books. For his birthday (November 10) his mother and sister were with him ; and he spent it happily though, as he said, ' in the key of B flat,' for it was saddened by the deaths of two intimate friends, Lieutenant Oliver Beer of the 8th West Kent on September 26, while leading his platoon against barbed wire at Hulluch, and Lieutenant A. G. Heath of the 6th West Kent at Loos on October 8.

For Christmas his family went to Oxford, his uncle

having lent them his house. Saumarez was well enough to come in daily for lunch and dinner, and to be taken round the Parks and to Port Meadow in a bath chair.

On January 3, 1916, he wrote to his mother: 'I have not only got more good out of, but actually enjoyed, 1915, more than any previous year, and would certainly not have forgone any part of it but the loss of friends.'

During January he was able to spend an evening occasionally at his friends' houses, and to go for long motor rides: and on the 28th he came home on leave to Bromley. But in view of his lameness he decided to buy a small second-hand car: and he writes to his mother:

Somerville, January 26.—I have bought the car, and don't think I shall regret it. Of course I've considered the expense and all connected with it and tried to be perfectly open-minded about it. I am to start learning to drive to-morrow: then it will be cleaned during the week-end, so I shall get into it next week. Tell Papa I have not left the tax, etc., out of consideration: and it seems very unlikely that petrol will be prohibited for some time yet. The governing consideration is that I'm not healed yet by a long way, and don't want to leave here till I am: but I must get about more. . . . F——, who is healed now and leaving next week (hit six weeks later than I), has got £105 from a grateful country, so you needn't think I'm running any financial risk. I stand to put £100 into War Loan, which is following Montagu's advice about lending the Government half one's money.

. . . I am going to the Boys' Club to-night to collect information for the Magazine, which I have got to edit—something to do. I spend most days now practising. Just you get out the Beethoven symphonies and we will have some good duets.

He duly learnt to drive his car (known among his friends as 'Ann'), and, after long rides from Oxford with occasional mishaps, two journeys home in her on leave from hospital, and another with his friend Victor Murray, of Magdalen and the Student Christian Union, to the Friends' School at Colwall near Malvern—which they reached on March 13—drove with his mother on March 21

from Bromley to Overstrand near Cromer, where Lady Mary Murray had kindly lent them her house. The car broke down late in the afternoon at Reepham; but both travellers always regarded such mishaps as part of the pleasures of the journey, and, leaving it for repairs, they proceeded to Cromer by the last train and arrived at 8 P.M. in pitch darkness, knowing nothing of the town. But they happened on a livery stable and drove to Overstrand, where his father joined them a few days later.

An engagement between Saumarez and Miss Agnes Murray, younger daughter of Professor Gilbert and Lady Mary Murray, was announced in April, but it was broken off by mutual consent fifteen months later, though his friendship with the whole family remained unchanged. He now sought fresh employment, on the Western front if possible, and at the end of April went before a Medical Board and was given two months' leave: but, on the ground of his wound, he was refused a transfer to the Royal Flying Corps. While on a visit to Oxford, his leave was cut short; on May 12 he was appointed to No. 5 Cadet Training Battalion stationed at Trinity College, Cambridge, and he went up in 'Ann' on May 15.





SAUMAREZ IN 1916.



CHAPTER IV

AT CAMBRIDGE, MAY 1916 TO AUGUST 1917

ON arrival at Cambridge Saumarez was lodged with the Cadet Corps in Trinity, occupying rooms in Whewell Court, lunching in the Senior Common Room, and dining in Hall with the other Officers and the Fellows at High Table. His duties, however, would involve his standing for nearly five hours daily on parade or at drill : and in the afternoon he had occasionally to lecture. His wound gave signs of trouble, and he went several times before a Medical Board. He was, however, found fit for light duty, and the problem of finding work for him was solved by his Colonel, who made him Assistant Adjutant, and gave him employment in his office, as well as some lecturing and examination work. Professor Gilbert Murray had applied on his behalf to a General commanding Intelligence on the French front, and had received a favourable reply. Colonel Ready, too, had promised to release him, and 'the Intelligence said [he was] urgently needed'; but in June the War Office refused to sanction his transfer.

Meanwhile his office work, which at times was very heavy, was varied by occasional College and Corps festivities and by visits paid by eminent persons to the Corps or the College. On July 1 he writes :

French was here inspecting on Wednesday and dined in Hall on Thursday night, but there was no function [as he was a member of the College] and, of course, we didn't get very near him. However, last night we had a great feast. Fifty-three cadets are leaving on Monday to get Commissions and the College wanted to entertain them before they left. So we had a regular blow-out on exactly the same scale as last week at our Trinity feast. I think they thoroughly enjoyed it, and certainly the Fellows were exceedingly delighted. I sat next to A. E. Housman, the Shropshire Lad. . . .

To his mother—

July 7.—Several exciting things have happened. The Adjutant is leaving for a Staff Course of five weeks on the 29th and the C.O. has offered me the job. If the Adjutant then gets a staff job I shall get this permanently, with perhaps Captain's rank in a few months. . . . I've been in charge a lot last week.

I got a piano in yesterday, not at all a bad one, by Strohmer : and if you would like to send me up some music I should be grateful. What I should really like would be the bound volume of Bach and the unbound one of the Choral Preludes, and any other things that I'm in the habit of playing.

To his sister—

July 12.—The music came safely, and many thanks to Mamma for it : she has made a capital selection. I went and bought some yesterday, Ravel's Pavane, which I used to have and lost, some Rachmaninoff, Debussy, Moussorgsky, and Vaughan Williams. Sir William Robertson was down to-day and I think very much pleased with everything. I had quite a little talk with him, and he's exceedingly pleasant.

To his mother—

July 29.—We had quite a pleasant inspection yesterday [by General Sir James Wolfe Murray]. We got the 137 cadets who passed the Exam. off after it : the College feasted them on Friday evening, and everything went admirably.

To his mother—

August 3.— . . . We had quite fun with the King this morning, just an absolutely informal visit. The cadets were all about together on the Backs, one Company bridging, one being lectured to, and one doing bayonet fighting and such. The King stayed over half an hour, and walked round talking to the C.O. with me in attendance almost the whole time. I couldn't get my glove off in time when shaking hands with him, and forgot to call him Your Majesty, but it didn't much matter. . . . I've been

working nine hours a day, and even more sometimes. . . . To-morrow I have to deliver a lecture on a distinctly complicated subject, 'The Powers of a C.O.,' which takes a lot of getting up.

To his mother—

(*Trin. Coll.*), *Sunday, August 6.*—I am putting in nine hours' hard work to-day, and even that won't see me nearly through the work, so I may go on until the early hours of to-morrow. There's a mass of work which must be got rid of before the new 200 odd [cadets] arrive to-morrow, as I shall have my hands full then. I've spent nearly four hours already at the typewriter getting out the names for the next War Office Exam.—an awful job, which fortunately only comes once a month. There's an organ recital at 8.30 to-night of Russian music (in honour of our guests from Russia) and I must go to that : so I am having sandwiches and cake now in the office instead of going into Hall, and it's a pleasant change. . . .

His hard work at Cambridge was varied by occasional visits to London and from Oxford friends, and one from his family for a week-end, August 12-14.

To his mother—

September 24.— . . . I am dreadfully busy now, and have 200 more cadets coming on Thursday to St. John's. Also a further 100 later in the month to Trinity Hall. I have also 200 law papers to correct. . . . I have got my second star, and am now a Lieutenant from May 13 last.

To his mother—

October 5.— . . . My 200 cadets have swelled to 235 coming to-day. I only hope they won't all come. We are forming a new Company in St. John's ; at present only three officers to deal with 235 men ! . . . It's such a lovely morning that I'm going out to Grantchester to see some trench work and leave this old office for a time.

To his mother—

October 8.— . . . The new company, 205 strong, is all fixed up at John's now. There are only four officers

at present. . . . I am writing another song, this time cheerful. It's in B major, which is a dreadful key for accidentals, and the piano part is so difficult that I can't play it. Still, it is amusing in the evenings.

To his mother—

October 16.— . . . I have now nearly finished the second song I told you about. The accompaniment is rather good, with two very bright changes of key, and some rich and oily harmonies, but the time is rather dull, I think : only I haven't yet heard it. You shall sing it when I come home, and see what it is like. . . .

To his mother—

October 19.— . . . I fill in the odd moments with work on another song, a sad song this time, to words of my own. But I haven't yet got very far, and I'm not sure that it will do. It is a great change from the last, being in good old A minor, a very, very easy key to write. The joy song, the one in B major, was a great success, though it wants a strong voice to cope with the flamboyant accompaniment.

To his mother—

Trinity, November 5.— . . . I'm dreadfully busy now : the arrears have heaped themselves up inextricably, and I am just getting rid of them : but now I have 300 Law papers to correct and four lectures as well to give this week. . . . To-day I have had to work most of the afternoon and nearly all morning except for church : and I could have gone on very much longer, but gave up in despair. So the songs don't get on very well ; in fact, when I've sketched them out, I generally leave it at that, and am too lazy to scribe the whole thing.

To his mother—

November 19.—It is a most awful day, as likewise yesterday, and very soon I've got to turn out and, laden with lantern slides, toil out to Barnwell, two miles away, on a bicycle, there to talk of Oxford. I've got some very jolly slides, and I hope they'll be interested : it's made me dreadfully sentimental to see pictures of Oxford again. . . .

I've started a new tune, which I think you'll like, a very straightforward and English tune, but I've a dreadful feeling that I've stolen it from somewhere. It sounds queerly familiar. But I can generally place a tune, and as I can't place this one, I shall continue with it. . . .

To his mother—

November 24.— . . . The work here seems to increase in volume and pettiness daily, and one simply never gets done. Now I have a terrible task before me, which will take a week, I should think, to prepare my accounts for audit by the C.O. The amount is about £22,000, and as far as I can see there's no prospect of the balances coinciding. The Boys' Club Camp accounts were a joke to this, for I have to run at least seven separate accounts on one cheque-book. Also, to complete the disaster, the Bank has mixed my private with my official accounts—the result, I suppose, of employing women !

. . . The lecture at Barnwell was a tremendous success. I never heard such applause in my life : and I can honestly say that they were thrilled at some of the slides. Also they laughed uproariously at the jokes, which was pleasing. I talked for seventy minutes, and was nearly sick with fright beforehand.

To his mother—

December 1.— . . . My accounts are slowly settling but will not balance, being about 6s. out on the *right* side, much to my amazement. . . . On Thursday afternoon Ely Cathedral is doing the Brahms requiem, so I am driving over an officer and his wife (both most delightful) in Ann, who is not yet sold.

Bletchley (On the way from Oxford to Cambridge), December 6.— . . . I've had a good time at Oxford—rather a sad one—for it's a terrible cenotaph now of friends and aspirations alike. . . . Bevers¹ was very nice indeed, and exactly confirmed what he'd said before and what I've always thought myself. He says, Don't on any account let any one touch [the leg] : it's a marvellous mend, and all that's wrong is that the bone being crooked the stresses on the knee joint are thrown out and so I can't walk, but that

¹ Mr. C. A. Bevers, B.M., St. John's College, Oxford.

time will accustom it to its new position, so that I shall be able to walk quite well though never perfectly. The bone is obviously crooked, and therefore no manipulation can possibly straighten it—and clearly it would be folly to break it again, seeing that it would certainly suppurate.

To his mother—

Trinity College, December 7.—[On an announcement that all Christmas leave, and probably all week-end leave, for troops serving at home was to be stopped :]

I suppose we shall continue to get about a week every four months and nothing else at all. I don't know how I shall manage, for the days off are the only remedy for the incessant small irritations of a job in which you never can keep pace with the work and never get any further. Still, it's not much to grumble at, now Asquith's gone and the last hope of any decent ideals and any honour buried with him. . . .

However, the War Office cancelled its instructions and eventually allowed Christmas leave from Thursday, December 23, to the following Tuesday, but forbade officers and men to travel by rail on Friday, December 24. But Saumarez scarcely expected to get away, for the press of examination and accounting work was bewildering. Meanwhile he writes to his father :

December 10.— . . . We had great fun yesterday at a concert out at Babraham. We gave two performances, 3 to 5.15 and 7 to 9.15, and as I was playing excessively difficult rag-time accompaniments most of the time continuously, I was pretty exhausted at the end, and perspiring at every pore. However, we had a most appreciative audience, and made about £15 for a Red Cross Hospital. . . .

I wonder if you're very sick at the new Cabinet. Everybody seems to think it a most unstable-looking edifice, and I am betting on the return of Asquith before the end of 1918. . . .

I am having an interview to-morrow with a man who may buy Ann, but what do you think for ? To convert her into a milk float ! It's a terrible come-down, but still if I can get £45 out of him I shall be enough resigned to pocket my pride, and anyway her appearance will be

completely changed by a new body. I shall miss her dreadfully. [She was sold in February 1917 for £20.]

To his mother—

December 14.— . . . I vehemently disagree with you about the Government: it's the nation almost entirely that has been at fault, and not Asquith and his sane men. As for the nation waiting to be led, it sounds very nice, but it's dreadfully untrue. However, as nobody knows what we're fighting for or how we're going to get it, it really doesn't matter two blows whether you care for your own liberty or other people's, which I suppose is the ideal difference between a Liberal and a Tory. And there is nothing to be done except work at the most futile and inhuman of jobs, and relax yourself in your leisure time with ill-mannered gibes at everyone in general and no one in particular. It's delightful, by the way, how absolutely every civilian (and most soldiers) have missed the point of the restrictions of leave. But as you haven't guessed it, I shan't tell you: only remember that the Army Council are quite as affectionate and home-loving as you and me, and they don't stop people's leave just because they think it funny, or even clever to do so.

The Christmas leave was spent at his home quietly with his people and Miss Murray. He returned to Cambridge on Thursday, December 28.

To his mother—

Trinity College, December 31.—This comes to wish you all at home the very happiest New Year and whatever good things 1917 can bring, including Peace and a proper holiday. I've quite settled down again, and feel almost as if I'd never been away; but I *did* enjoy my leave most dreadfully, and can hardly bear to think how lovely it all was. . . .

The wind and rain and warm air so excited me yesterday that I had the old horse out for three-quarters of an hour, the first time since September. The groom has improved him enormously, and he will gallop at the slightest provocation, so I am very stiff to-day: but it *was* fun, and I am going out in the afternoons now regularly before tea.

I'm not really pessimistic in the sense that I've lost the feeling of ideals with which we all went into the war. But I do agree with Slig very much when he says that we've suffered exactly the same experience as the Knights of the Round Table in entering upon a task for which we are not good enough, and so rather losing our soul than finding it. I do think the country isn't at all doing itself honour by the way it's conducting the war, although I suppose it might be very much worse, and any way the whole Allied situation is so obscure. Partly of course what one hates so, and it happens to every one serving at home, is the way that soldiering in this country takes from you the things you want and gives you what you don't want. I mean the only thing left of all that made up my life before is the music: no books (no time for them either), no intellectual exercise, none of the old friends, no Boys' Club, no beloved country, and none of the things to look forward to that were such fun, Fellowships and all that one dreamt of doing quite idly.

And instead one's got work and luxury and plenty of money, which isn't a very good bargain! So you see (and really I'm not complaining, for I know too well through other people's troubles how infinitely worse things are with most) one does rather starve. . . .

I have added four bars to the song to give it a solid opening, and it is to be performed (I hope) for the next cadet concert here. . . .

To his mother—

January 7, 1917.— . . . We were congratulated by the War Office the other day on our office efficiency!

I've been out riding every day except Wednesday and am getting quite expert: in fact I had a race yesterday with the groom, though I must admit he won. My horse, a new one that I was trying and full of spirit, ran away with me on Thursday and galloped about half a mile before it could be pulled up: however, I stuck on, and thus learnt a good deal more about riding in a few minutes than I should otherwise have acquired in a month of armchair riding. It really is delightful, and just like flying, though I have had a severe back-ache in consequence lately.

I am trying to get the C.O. to recommend me for a job now going, viz. the raising of irregular troops in Southern Persia—no previous knowledge of Persian required. (This is *private*, of course.) It would be most splendid experience, and as someone will have to put Persia straight after the war, I think it would be a very excellent start for a political job there, than which I should like nothing better in the world. However, he says it's a beastly country, having travelled from India via Bushire and Seistan to Russia. And in any case I don't suppose they'd look at an old crock like me. But I *would* love it, and I am going to try and persuade him at least to send in my name.

However, he wrote (January 11) that 'the C.O. says my physical disabilities will bar me from ever doing that kind of thing : he knows Persia fairly well, and wouldn't consider it for me.'

To his mother—

January 11, contd.— . . . I am reading 'Tristram Shandy': it is amazing rubbish, but very very good in an Aristophanic way, and Uncle Toby ought to be known to all human beings.

I am trying to think of a suitable song for you. The present one is going to be comparatively easy to play, and tuneful, rather good I think, to Yeats's words, 'Had I the heavens' embroidered cloths,' but it's a love song and rather high. However, I hope you'll like it better than its predecessors. . . .

To his mother—

January 14.— . . . The new song is nearly finished and really is rather good, only rather sugary in its sentiment. However, I think you'll like it the best. . . .

To his mother—

January 21.— . . . We had the Duke of Connaught down on Friday : he was very nice, and seemed pleased with all the eyewash got up for his benefit. It meant standing about in the cold for all the afternoon, but I survived.

To his mother—

February 4.—There are terrible rumours this morning of Grimsby in ruins, Beatty sunk, and a big scrap in the North Sea. I wonder if there's anything in it, and hope that one fishing boat sunk is the net damage sufficient to give rise to the rumour. Meanwhile we wait and see, and I get hourly more and more furious with fools who say the war will end in three months. I have determined to give some Company a War Lecture this week on the general prospects, and to tell them all about it, casting aside Defence of the Realm Acts and such—provided the Colonel doesn't come. I mean, it's so rotten the way we are all holding up our hands at Germany's new submarine proclamation as a crime, and it makes me mad with diplomatic hypocrisy and diplomatic Pecksniffery. And then we yelp about the state of things in Germany and don't trouble our fat heads to think what a victory by the Allies means to the beliefs and passionate convictions of honour and righteousness of sixty million Germans. Oh, they're wrong enough, of course they are, but sometimes I'd rather be wrong with Bethmann than right with Lloyd George. The way we quote international law is so sickening. Of course the law is always on the side of the landowner against the poacher, always on the side of the established *versus* the revolutionary, but what comfort is there in that? You'll see that I really am angry this time: so angry that I should like to resign my commission sometimes and stump the country until overwhelmed by rotten eggs and patriotism and the King's High Justice.

. . . I bought 'Sea Warfare' the other day, and am setting some of the poems. At present I am engaged on one about mine-sweepers, 'Sent up Unity, Claribel, Assyrian, Stormcock, and Golden Gain,' and am really being quite successful. It's going to be easy, too, and I think you will like it. Perhaps they will do to publish, if successful! I played at a cadet concert last night: the piano was bad and unsuitable for all florid music, so I played Bach in D minor and it really was a success, that grave, haunting old music. I don't estimate the success by the applause and the encore, both of which are perquisites of Adjutants rather than musicians, but

by the hush with which they listened to the closing cadences of the fugue, and the absence of coughing, a greater testimony. . . .

Our new E Company comes on Tuesday, 200 cadets, to St. John's, when we shall have over 750 cadets, or a total strength of 900. So it's a big command now; but everything runs very smoothly, and it's almost pure routine.

To his mother—

Trinity College, March 4:— . . . On Tuesday we have the Commandant and two of the Staff of St. Cyr (the *greatest* military academy in the world!) visiting us in the afternoon, so I must think of a few French compliments. We are a good deal flattered at their being sent here and not to Oxford, and in fact we are getting rather conceited, as we have been told more than once lately that we may be considered the best Cadet Battalion. We had another of our monthly final dinners to the successful cadets of A Company last Friday—a *very* good dinner and excellent speeches. I quite enjoyed it, though they are beginning to be rather monotonous, as I have been to every one so far—nine or ten, that is. . . .

To his mother—

March 11.— . . . My new song is complete, and the professional tenor . . . says he'll sing it and the 'Dreams' one (which he thinks rather like Grieg!) at a public concert here in a fortnight. I doubt if he will, though, as it would mean getting the authors' permission (Yeats and Kipling), and I must satisfy myself that they are worth it, which is very doubtful at present. . . .

To his mother—

March 18.— . . . I am trying to learn the whole of the Chorale, Prelude and Fugue, and also the Pathétique and the Appassionata, so you may imagine I do a good deal of piano-strafting—especially now L—— [who had the rooms below him] is away: and yesterday I broke a string! However, I think my technique really is beginning to improve at last.

To his mother—

March 26.— . . . I was very busy yesterday all day, but had left just a short time to write before Cumberbatch came to dine, when suddenly a number of rumours and facts came to my notice, and I had to dash round and prepare no end of a scheme in case we're all called out. . . . The rumours going round are wonderful this time, and nobody seems to know what there is behind it: however, it's clear there's something. Personally I think the old Hun is quite certain to attempt an invasion before the end of the war, and the experts seem to think it practicable: but I'm not very confident either way.

We are pretty busy just now: we have a final Exam. for another 194 cadets who leave next Saturday, and a further 140 come in on the following Saturday (April 7th). I have also been going about a lot lately entertaining and being entertained in a quiet way. . . .

. . . I was Boarded on Friday: the wound has quite closed again, and hardly hurts at all. However, they said the probability was that in the course of the next six months or so it would have to be done again, so we must leave it at that.

To his mother—

April 15.—On Wednesday we went to Huntingdon. . . . and the Major in command took me up for a joy-ride! Oh, it *was* so heavenly; we flew for about 15 minutes, only about 150 feet up, and did some lovely spirals and turns. It was bumpy up, and we pitched quite a lot, and it was the most glorious sensation I've ever had—it made me quite mad to go on flying.

The great show on Thursday was awful fun, and most realistic. . . . Everything went splendidly, and it was instructive to a great degree. The victory was given, by an error, to the other Battalion, but it was our show all day, and a great day. The one blur is that a small boy ran away with one of our bombs (while unobserved) which was unexploded, and playing with it, blew off three fingers. We really took every precaution, and but for this it would have been a marvellous success, for we used much explosive and made an awful row: also we had

such thick smoke clouds that nothing was visible at times. The aeroplanes were perfectly wonderful, swooping and dropping bombs within twenty feet of the ground. . . .

He had decided to consult Mr. H. A. Barker, the famous osteopath, about his leg, and did so on May 14. He writes to his sister :

May 15.—He diagnosed the trouble as contraction of the synovitic membranes, or whatever they are (which is what the previous opinions had said), producing adhesions. He says he can cure it very simply by putting me under gas and rotating the tibia. It sounds alarming, but he says I shall not have to lie up at all, and will be able to walk away from his abode. So I shall come up one day in June (unless I think better of it) and have my, or rather Papa's, money's worth. He expressed a good deal of admiration of my luck in having a leg, and seemed to think it a very good piece of surgery. . . .

. . . To-morrow afternoon the elect among us go to watch Smuts taking his honorary degree and then to a tea-flight of almost the whole University to 'meet' him.

Saumarez was operated on by Mr. Barker on June 18 under an anæsthetic. His whole visit only took about fifteen minutes. His stiff knee-joint was loosened, and he was able to get down to Victoria on the top of an omnibus and to walk home from the Bromley station.

To his mother—

June 24.—[After mentioning a visit to his friend Captain Meyrick Carré, M.C., at the Cadet Camp at Newmarket.] . . . I've done very little except work and Persian, except going out to find Fleam Dyke the other evening. I can now read short fables in the original quite easily, and am gradually acquiring a stock of words: but I am also approaching the fatal moment when I shall have to tackle Arabic in order to get any further: and I read to my great alarm the other day that no one, except perhaps a very rare student here and there, could ever learn Arabic without a master. As you know, I think a master spoils the fun, if one can get on without.

I have much information to give Papa on Persian

verbs, which interest me very particularly on account of their likeness to our own. The most remarkable instance is that the future is made with the present tense of the word *Khvādtan*, to wish, will, desire, etc., and the participle,—entirely different of course from Sanskrit, which forms like the Greek verb.

To his mother—

July 4.— . . . The C.O. is putting in my application for the Staff course, I hope immediately, and I am going to acquire enough of the languages to get a Staff appointment in the East : otherwise I may at least get to France, I hope to the Intelligence, in six months or so.

To his mother—

July 8.— . . . I've had rather an interesting day. I lunched with Jenkinson, the University Librarian, and there met Miss Elisabeth Bridges, the daughter of the Poet Laureate, who is up here studying Persian. Afterwards we went on to the house of her master, the English authority on Persia, Professor Browne. He's the most wonderful talker and a very delightful person : he talked to me absolutely ceaselessly for an hour and a half of things Oriental, and became quite friends. He has a great affection for Aubrey Attwater,¹ of whom we talked also. . . .

I religiously attended all the marks of yesterday's sexcentenary celebration, beginning with a 70 minutes' lecture by Lapsley : then the garden party, then a commemoration service in Chapel and finally the dinner, of which I send you the menu—a rather beautiful document to be carefully preserved. The College presented us all who live in College with a historical sketch of the King's Hall, very well got up, and I should think very interesting : so we were made to feel quite at home. . . .

On July 15 he writes to his mother that his Persian studies had suffered since the War Office had intimated that 'there was not the least chance' of his ever getting to Persia. He had been to Bedford School with the Major of the Battalion 'to see whether eighteen of the boys, in

¹ An old Alleynian : Lieut. 3rd Battalion Royal Welsh Fusiliers ; badly wounded at Neuve Chapelle, March 1915.

consideration of their O.T.C. training, were worth 400 marks for admission to Sandhurst. After [the inspection] I dined with the Colonel here, and then went to a show on the Gogs,¹ from which I got back at 3 A.M.'

His application for a Staff course was unsuccessful; but on July the War Office applied for his release from his work at Cambridge in order to send him to the Western Front. Meanwhile he was ordered to Oxford to inspect the Balliol Cadet Battalion, but received a telegram from a regiment at Ottringham, near Hull, requiring him to give evidence before a court-martial on an ex-cadet. So on July 22 he writes to his mother:

I leave here [to-night] at 5 P.M., King's Cross at 9.10 P.M. and get to Hull at 4.45 A.M. Then I shall catch the 10.4 A.M. on to Ottringham, give my evidence, and catch a train from Hull at 3, getting to Oxford at 9 P.M., by which time I shall be fairly weary. Then I suppose I shall have to go up there again in two or three weeks to give the evidence all over again.² It is a horrid nuisance, but I must say that I always welcome the opportunity of a new railway journey, even though it be of the dullest. I'm told it is hideous flat country near the mouth of the Humber. . . .

The official application came through for me on Friday, and the C.O. wrote off saying he could spare me on August 10, an odd coincidence, as that was the day I was hit. So I suppose I'll get out about the middle of August, do a month at Merville, and then (with luck) get posted to a corps R.F.C. headquarters or a Heavy Artillery Brigade, and start on my own. . . . The C.O. is really very sad at my going, but he has been extraordinarily nice about it, and thinks I'm right to go. It will be a sad parting, for, though I never have really settled down here, or been reconciled to this place, one can't help growing into it, and everybody is very pleasant. . . .

His mother visited him at Cambridge, July 28 to

¹ Night operations on the Gog-Magog Hills near Cambridge.

² Before the court-martial; the first evidence was for the written summary which went to Headquarters, Northern Command, with the request for court-martial.

August 3. On August 4 there was a farewell dinner in Trinity to the outgoing batch of cadets, at which he took his leave of the battalion. (See *post*, Chapter XI.)

To his mother—

August 5.— . . . My own speech came last, and I think it was about up to the usual standard. I was immensely flattered; first of all the Master spoke of Balliol and Balliol scholarships and Jowett in a most charming way; then Parry¹ talked about me, and finally the Colonel, who was in wonderful form, said he felt as though he were losing his right hand and his left. So you see I had something to reply to, which it was not easy to do gracefully. However, I mixed one or two jokes in, which fortunately were laughed at, and managed to survive to the end and to say most of what I had intended. Hardy duly arrived and was very pleasant, and, I think, a good deal impressed by the whole ceremony. . . .

To his father—

August 8.— . . . A humorous thing is that last Saturday an Army Council Instruction appeared stating that in future all Adjutants are to be Captains. I'm not having my uniform changed, as in any case I go back to 2nd Lieut. in a few days, but it's rather pathetic, as it's probably the only time in my life that I'll hold so exalted a rank. True, it's without pay or allowances, so it's only eyewash, but still— . . .

His sister visited him unexpectedly from August 6 to 10, *en route* for a short holiday with her father in Norfolk. He was unable to come too. He was in London on the 9th, on the invitation of a brother officer, at a lunch given to Mr. Walter Long by the West India Committee.

To his mother—

August 12.— . . . My lunch on Thursday was quite amusing, and I thumped the table to some most proper Imperialistic sentiments, and laughed inwardly at these prosperous and most benevolent princes of commerce—a motley crowd. I have come to the conclusion with some-

¹ The Rev. R. St. J. Parry, M.A., Fellow of Trinity College, Cambridge.

thing of a thump . . . that I am a pure anarchist, and shall always be critically hostile of systems, whether of thought, or of government, or of religion. This rather narrows the possible careers one might envisage, but can't for the present be helped !

To his sister—

Station Hotel, Hull, August 21.—This is to wish you many, many happy returns of the day, and the last year of war. I shall be at home to-morrow night, but not till quite fairly late. . . . My case is over here, and I wasn't even called, so it was a more monstrous waste of time, temper, and everything else than one would easily believe. . . . Still one gets some amusement from the journey, and still more from staying at a Station Hotel, but I grudge the sheer waste of time.

I have ordered you two books by Henry James, 'The Wings of the Dove' and 'The Portrait of a Lady': the latter I think particularly wonderful ; and I'm sure you'll like them.

I had a most affecting farewell with the Colonel on Sunday ; he was overwhelmingly kind and has been extraordinarily good to me. I have hated saying Good-bye all round, but have now nearly finished.

CHAPTER V

ON THE WESTERN FRONT, AUGUST TO DECEMBER 1917

SAUMAREZ arrived at Boulogne on August 26, and reported next day at G.H.Q. at Montreuil. 'An attractive place at first sight with no troops except clerks and a few sentries, so that it gives one a most peaceful feeling. [It stands] well up on the round summit of a hill crowned with three enormous ramparts. . . . They say it is very wet and frightfully cold in winter, and it is certainly hideously smelly in parts.' The only walk was along the ramparts, a pass being required to go outside. 'It is very funny [he writes to his aunt, Mrs. Herapath] how insignificant one feels and is now [after his post at Cambridge]. I feel more or less on my best behaviour.'

He was sent off on August 29 to the H.Q. of the Fourth Army to take up counter-battery work, then in its infancy. Here an officer of whom he asked the way in the dark, being an ex-cadet from Cambridge, recognised his voice and addressed him by name. After a weary and very roundabout journey of a day and a half in heavy rain, and a night in a tent, he reported at the Fourth Army Headquarters, and on August 31 reached his post, somewhere between Dunkirk and Nieuport.

To his father—

August 31.—We are right among the dunes: I share quite a pleasant dug-out with two gunner officers and work in a Nissen hut with two Majors, who are very pleasant and most ready to instruct me; so that it all seems satisfactory. . . . At the moment a 'destructive shoot' is going on over our heads at a large German gun they think they've spotted, and the air buzzes with planes watching the show, so it's quite amusing. . . . The weather at last seems to be settling, which is a blessing, as one gets swamped with sand in the wind. It is extra-

ordinarily pleasant to be up here again, and I feel quite a different person altogether, very young and gay. . . . I'm dying for letters.

On September 1, after wishing his mother many happy returns of her birthday on September 4, he continues to her :

[My business] is in the counter-battery office of this corps, and consists of work on aeroplane photographs for the most part. I have to mark up all the batteries on them as they come in, index and file them, and report new work and activity of all sorts. I have a clerk to help with the indexing, etc. At the moment there are no new photographs owing to the weather, so I am working up old ones and learning about them—it appears to be mainly a matter of learning by experience, and is very interesting, though rather a strain on the eyes. I work directly under an exceedingly pleasant gunner Major, whom it's a delight to work for. The C.B. office is divided into two parts, our part ('the brains') and the 'activity' part, which deals with all reports of shelling, etc., and general information from the batteries. I have to learn this work in order to take my turn of night duty—mainly answering the telephone and taking down reports. . . . It's rather a large order to take on a whole new subject, i.e. photos, and in addition to have to pick up artillery administration under these conditions. However, as there is nothing else under the sun to do here, we being in the middle of a most desolate waste of sand, I shall not suffer from distractions.¹ . . . The contrast out here with what it was in 1915 is simply incredible, notably the masses of material and of men engaged in labour work behind the lines : and it's queer how all one's old associations and the people of the old Battalion come back to one's mind with the sound of the shells. These latter amble overhead in a very genteel manner, but so far haven't been directed at us—it's all very desultory at the present time.

I feel extraordinarily fit, and am immensely happy

¹ The work, of course, was for seven days a week, Sunday being marked by a rather better dinner and better tobacco instead of the ration. A colonel in the area had told a new chaplain, 'You understand, I will not permit any cards, spirits, or religious services in these headquarters.'

at being out here at it again. No doubt one will get sick of it, but I feel quite a different person already—only I do want some letters. . . .

To his mother—

September 4.—To-day and yesterday have been the most marvellously beautiful days, perfectly calm and sunny and not too hot : and all day long the photographs come pouring in. For about nine hours a day I sit poring over them (fortunately one can't do anything with them by artificial light), and so far I have not got into arrears. It's now after 9 o'clock and another fifteen or so have just come in which were taken this very afternoon : so you see not much time is lost on them.

It's exceedingly interesting, however, and will be much more so when I get intimate with the area in which the Hun batteries are. This is a large order, for it covers a good many square miles, and of course the number of gun positions runs into hundreds : but already I am getting the hang of a good many of the more persistently annoying ones. . . . When a lull comes—if the weather hinders the R.F.C.'s activity, that is—I shall go round in the car and visit various odd people, field survey, kite balloons, R.F.C., and what not ; and that will be great fun. But at present the photos swallow every minute : and I can assure you that it's astonishingly hard work, and very tiring to the eyes, especially as one's looking through a magnifying glass most of the time.

This is a very noisy spot, I find. The last two nights the Hun has sent air-raids over to bomb the large town behind us [Dunkirk], and I hear them up again at this moment, with the Archies blazing away at them and the searchlights playing. All day long the sky is full of our planes, flying incredibly high and looking so beautiful, with the Archies bursting very idiotically miles below them, and frequently one hears the very distant roll of machine-gun fire echoing in the sky as they strike a wandering Hun. Then all day the Hun shells round about within an area of a mile or so, mostly battery positions ; not at all intensely as a rule, and not doing much damage, but on and off most of the day. Then of course our guns are fairly active too, so that most of the time there's something

going on; and always there are planes darting down the sky—such a joy to watch.

We were shelled last night, first just after dinner and then about 2 A.M. It wasn't a very serious affair either time, only a few shells, and no damage was done, for the sand stops the burst very well, and our dug-outs are most efficient. The worst is that it makes such a cloud of dust which mixes with the fumes and produces a horrid atmosphere. But please don't be in the least alarmed, for I can assure you that no pains are being spared on our dug-outs, which are really proof against most things. . . .

. . . There is such a cannonade going on outside: every Archie in the neighbourhood is blazing off at the stars: they can't, of course, see a thing, but it keeps the Hun from coming low down—not that he does much: now machine guns are fairly rattling out. I must go and see what's on.

—It was a most jolly sight, the sort of thing which need not be described to you, for you're familiar with it from air-raids; but the moon is too high for the searchlights to show their best. . . .

To his mother—

H.Q., H.A. XVth Corps, B.E.F., September 9.— . . . I can't tell you what I wouldn't give to examine three or four farm houses and some tracks not five miles away from here—merely to lie and listen at night for rations and so on coming up would give me some clues, but he's a wonderful fellow, that Hun, and knows his job. Of course I can't go into detail at all, but you will realize that in this country, where things have been so long stationary, there are lots of disused positions, etc., so that our job is not merely to study the gun-pits, but the whole question of roads, tracks, tramways, horse-lines, and supply generally.

. . . Not having had any time off since I've been here, I took a holiday this afternoon and went for my longest walk since I was hit; it must have been nearly seven miles, for I'd counted on getting a lift back, but only got about two miles instead of four—I was tired and lame, but it's all worn off now. I struck across the dunes first, and then walked along the beach to quite a pleasant large villa

place [Furnes], packed with officers, our own and Allies' nurses, Royalties and quite a lot of smart people. It was a jolly walk : I might quite have been on a summer holiday. All along the beach were men bathing (I, alas, had omitted a towel, but shall go some day) : there were two football matches, numbers of officers galloping about, and in one place a Battalion having sports, with a band playing. It all looked extraordinarily jolly, with the sun and blue sea and wide expanse of firm yellow sand ; and above, endless aeroplanes darting in the sky. The walk back, however, along the road is not so thrilling, though in places quite pleasant. . . .

To his father—

September 12.— . . . I've been occupied [to-day] mainly in getting my indexes and history sheets (of Hun batteries) more or less up to date—no small matter when they run into some hundreds. . . .

This evening after tea I went with the Colonel in the car ; we visited two battery positions fairly close up, and also the headquarters of the people who locate enemy guns in action for us, and studied their instruments, which form a very wonderful and most fascinating piece of machinery. I enjoyed it immensely : and the really strafed atmosphere of close up has a strange fascination—rather like a fairy-tale full of trolls and dragons—about it, especially in the outrageous unreality of a fine summer evening.

To his sister—

September 16.— : : : Yes, I agree with your criticism of James's people, and I think that's what makes some of them, at all events, perilously unsubstantial. But they *are* wonderful, and I'm very glad you like him. You'd find the trait carried to a really irritating pitch in 'The Awkward Age,' and I believe in several of the others, but I haven't read much more. I want 'What Maisie Knew,' but I'm afraid there's no cheap or handy edition—he's still too great and unintelligible, I suppose. . . .

A severe attack of illness on September 15, described as probably a form of 'sand colic,' caused his removal with a temperature of 104 to the Corps Rest Camp almost on

the sea, in tents among the dunes. A fellow-patient there had been a near neighbour at Bromley. Saumarez was well in a week.

To his mother—

September 26.—[This afternoon] we were carrying out a practice strafe on the Bosch, and for fifteen minutes every gun in the place was going hard, for the last five minutes as hard as they could go. I went up with another officer to an observation post in my 'many-countied' town [Nieupoort] to watch. We drove in the car to just inside the place, and then walked across the shapeless heaps of brick which litter the whole place to the observation post, the remains of a house badly knocked about with ladders up the inside to the third floor, whence you get a wonderful view straight down on to our first line, and the Bosch not 1000 yards away. It was as if one looked out of Julie's room [at home] and saw the line of hedge at the top of the field [about 400 yards off] covered by a wall of many coloured smoke, with an occasional gap, through which you'd just distinguish buildings about as far off as the Boys' County School: in front a great mushroom of earth about half-way up the field would spurt up as the Bosch replied, with occasional shots bursting in ruins about as far off as the greenhouse [40 yards]—only all flat of course, with dunes in the dim background. It really was a sight, the best bombardment I've seen yet; I don't suppose it did much damage, for there was hardly any reply. The town itself is a horrible sight, not of course razed to the ground like the Somme villages, but an amorphous mass of brick and beams and holes, through which you wend a precarious way: sometimes you can tell you're in a street and sometimes you can't. People of wide experience out here say they've never been in a nastier place! . . .

To his mother—

October 1, 3.30 A.M.—Well, you see that I'm on night duty again. . . . I started at 8 A.M. this morning, and with not more than $1\frac{1}{2}$ hours off all told for meals. I worked really hard until 2.30 A.M. when I gave up, warmed some tea and ate biscuits and chocolate, and shall now

write letters and read till about 7 A.M. (until it's light) when I'll clear off a few oddments. Then I shall be relieved about 8, breakfast and bed till 1 P.M. and then more work—but possibly I'll get out in the car for a little to-morrow evening. So you see it's pretty strenuous.

I don't know that I can very well describe intelligibly the work of this office, but the work is mainly the following: First of all taking down reports of shelling and Hun guns active, which are coming in so fast that during the active hours of the day, say 10 A.M. to 6 P.M., we have to have three people on three different telephones very often merely writing as hard as they can. Then the shelling reports come in in the form of locations with compass bearings from observation posts very largely; therefore these have to be plotted on a large map, so that if you can get an intersection you can assume that a certain definite Hun battery is firing. Having located the active battery, if he's causing trouble, you have to batter him, i.e. turn on the right people, send up an aeroplane if necessary, and generally get busy, until he stops, if possible. Meanwhile you keep in mind that certain information of enemy activity needs tabulating and boiling down from various reports which go in at intervals, so that when about a dozen Bosch batteries are shelling a dozen different spots, and another dozen of our batteries are shelling a further dozen Bosch spots, the air gets a bit thick and we all temporarily go off our heads. . . .

Of course there is much more [in the work] than meets the eye; and I assure you the amount of recording, tabulating, and general intelligence information done in this office, in addition to the actual business of the moment, passes belief. It's a most wonderful sight to see three people in a row all trying to hear messages on indistinct telephones and shouting them out, while some one else is trying to give orders to Tom, Dick, and Harry about shoots and planes and what not; and myself talking French on the 'phone is not a bad sight.

Quite apart from all this, in the last two days I have been trying to do some of my own 'pigeon' of a special sort, i.e. a monograph on a particular area of Hun activity. I first made a mosaic of photos to cover the area (as far as possible): this is troublesome work, as they don't all

fit, being taken at different heights. Then I made a tracing of the area from the map, and then, from the mosaic and various sources, tried to fill in information on various points, mainly with regard to tracks and light railways. This is what I've just been working on from about 11.30 to 2.30, and I've now got all my facts, and am trying to draw some deductions: but I'm very much puzzled as to what is really going on, and I haven't established much. Meanwhile the Major told the General about it, and he came and looked at it this afternoon, so I shall have to produce no end of a screed. . . . I suppose I've spent about eight hours already on the job, one way and another. But it's awful fun, and intensely interesting. I should so love to show it you! And I think you'd be impressed. . . .

To his father—

October 3.— . . . I have finished the great research. It has been great fun, but the results are fairly negative, at least the theories I have formed pretty nearly counter-balance each other. Still there it is, three pages of neat foolscap with a rather good photographic mosaic, inked in in two colours, and a rough map tracing. . . . It is my first bit of work as H.A. Intelligence Officer, for hitherto I have worked solely for the Counter-Battery Department, but I really belong to both. . . .

The weather was occasionally trying: on October 9 he writes that a terrific gale is blowing, and 'the air is a whirling mass of sand, through which it is really difficult to move: and even though door and windows are firmly shut now, the air in this hut is full of it, driven in through the crevices.' . . . 'The Flanders variety of rain seems different from all others,' and is quite irresistible. 'Of course we had raids over every night for a much longer stretch than London: but the civilians merely retire to their cellars and don't yelp for blood.'

To his sister—

October 11.— . . . I don't think I have sufficient wits left to enter into a proper argument about Henry James: at all events I don't feel at the moment worthy to take up the cudgels for him, especially as 'The Sense of the Past'

is just the finishing touch to my sleepy tendencies [he was writing while on night duty] and nothing but a magazine holds me apparently in this job. I should however like to defend the great man : I do not think he's the kind of person who complicated words without meaning in order to appear subtle or profound, but because he loved the sound of his periods (and partly too the look of them, the poise I mean—*vide* his meticulous punctuation); and while phrase-making may, and in him certainly does, sometimes descend into utter pedantry, I think on the whole he's generally delightfully successful and does use words with a fine subtlety as well as a rolling sound.

The other criticism I can't face, but it's rather like what a very delightful Scotsman here, a Colonel, argued with me the other day à propos of Henry James. He said that any man who could waste his time writing of these idle unreal gilded excrescences of a bad order of society and their horrible vulgar self-satisfied tourings in Europe, when he might have written of the real live men who were making America and doing things, proves himself incurably diseased and no artist. I think this is pretty true : at all events, delivered slowly and menacingly in the broadest Scots it's most unanswerable, and we hammered away at one another for a long time upon it. : . .

To his father—

October 15, 5 A.M.—This, or rather yesterday morning, being a perfect autumn day, I borrowed the car and went out with another fellow to an observation post in a very famous village which gives you a wonderful view of country. Incidentally we called on two of the most famous English-women ¹ of the war—I think you'll have read their book : unfortunately they were out, but we passed them on the road, and at all events I can say that I've seen them and seen their house.

To his mother—

October 16.— . . . I've been out in a car . . . this afternoon with the Colonel and the Brigade Major to an observation post. This was amusing, as we ran into a

¹ Miss Mairi Chisholm and Mrs. Knocker, afterwards Baroness T'serclaes. See *The Cellar House of Pervyse*, 1916.

wild barrage and had to duck for our lives into a covered trench, after sheltering in some ruins for half an hour with the Bosch dropping a high explosive shell methodically about every minute on the sand in front. We got a very pleasing view, however, from the O.P. when we did get there, and saw ten or twelve miles away in Hunland.

[On an elaborate 'appreciation' he had constructed of certain enemy activities.] The whole thing reminds me rather of Wecklein restoring lost odes of Sappho: not that Bosch artillery can be well compared to that passionate lady, being a coldly methodical affair, but only that we have, so to speak (I shall soon get into writing 'As who should say'), hardly ever more than one letter visible underneath the palimpsest (that's not quite right!!! but appears intelligible), and frequently none at all, and no metre to guide us. However, the shells still keep arriving! . . .

To his mother—

October 18. Midnight.—To-morrow we have to show round a General from our latest Ally, which will be amusing. . . . But lately I've spent most of my time making an enormous estimate. I can't go into details, I'm afraid, but it means covering pages of foolscap with marks and notes on Bosch gun positions, and trying to get at truth, after which I'm supposed to be a most earnest seeker. The trouble, of course, is that the limits are so undefined—you know a certain amount definitely, some more is probable, the possible covers a wide area, the unknown over-shadows all, and finally, you can't trust all of your positive evidence—so it's a nice problem for the honest, and I'm afraid I shall soon content myself with very much less than truth. Still, I shall have established a little.

. . . I think about the Psalms that while one admires and longs for the faith of the Psalmist, one's got to realize that that kind of absolute material certainty has gone out of the world and isn't ever coming back, and it's because of that that it's so difficult to see how faith is to be preached.

To his mother—

October 25.— . . . I was in Tuesday's *Gazette* (vide *Times* under 'Special Appointments'), and consequently

am now wearing the green tabs, to the great amusement of the mess, who, however, seem to think them rather smart. . . . I have been doing an amusing bit of liaison with our gallant allies lately, and talk most vivid French—in fact I discussed photos for an hour, going hard, the other night in a mixture of French and English—they're very pleasant, and it's great fun.

Unfortunately the Corps Commander failed to understand what the 'estimate' aimed at, and he writes on November 4 to his mother :

So I've now had to produce a very long and complete explanation written in the simplest language (as if for the children), saying exactly what the problem is, why I consider it needed critical examination, why I have adopted the methods I invented, what I hope to establish, etc., etc. Previously I had stated all this very concisely and consequently in rather heavy English, written originally partly to clear my own mind, and for no other eye than the Colonel's—and now I've been involved in all this ! It's really rather amusing, but some of the inferences are perhaps not too encouraging from a larger point of view. [He had also been put on to instruct the R.F.C. in photos of the area on a bigger scale.] One feels a bit nervous of lecturing about ground to men who are constantly flying over it, though it's clear that I ought to know more about it than anyone else at the moment, merely because I spend so much time at it. In addition I've to prepare a new map for a piece of country from photos, which is a lengthy job if one's very careful of accuracy, and as it's in the nature of a test for a pilot, I shall have to be.

But what looms very close now is that in a few days now I shall have completed four weeks of work on the screed I was talking about above. This means four separate estimates covering a month, and by putting them together we hope to get some way on towards settling questions which haven't yet been attempted here : but the putting them together is going to be a long undertaking, probably two days' work at least.

. . . I got a compliment out of Corps Intelligence the other day ; they also read my publications, and said it was

the first instance of any real contribution to intelligence work being made by a counter-battery Intelligence Officer ! . . . Of course the labours mentioned above are all side-lines—the main job of keeping up to date with photos, correcting the map, and discussing positions with the squadron, etc., all goes on, so that one's constantly interrupted, and also I've to help in here defeating the Bosch a good deal more now, as we're short-handed.

His first lantern lecture to the R.F.C. [he writes to his mother, November 9] was not altogether a success. The lantern would not work properly ; no preparations had been made : ' As most of the difficult pictures were put in inside out, so that East not only was West, but also the hills were hollow and *vice versa*, and the bit of country is admittedly one of the hardest, if not the hardest, you could find anywhere, it wasn't quite fair. In addition, the light kept failing. However, some of it was all right.'

On November 19 preparations began for the transfer of the Corps Headquarters from the dunes to a chateau at Fosse, some three miles south of Estaires. Saumarez was sent on in advance on a motor-bicycle. He regretted leaving a very interesting front ' full of features which you don't get elsewhere,' and with work going well ; but he partly consoled himself by getting a joy-ride out of the Air Squadron. ' It was a black leaden day, with some wind and scudding white clouds, into which we got at about 2500 ft. ; we came up over here, and I picked out my dugout ; of course we didn't go up to the line, but one could see guns shooting and people being shelled, and a wonderful view of the whole area. I enjoyed it infinitely, and got again the tremendous elation of having done with the earth and its troubles that I felt the previous time I flew.'

To his mother—

November 24.—We settled into our chateau [Fosse] yesterday, and are now functioning merrily under strange and rather amusing conditions. . . . When the other people cleared out yesterday, we found they hadn't left us a morsel of food or a single cooking utensil. So I went off in the car, armed with 450 francs which we collected, and bought

food of every kind, including meat, vegetables, sugar, flour, fruit, bread, butter, milk, and everything necessary for a General's dinner, and in addition crockery and cutlery, as well as saucepans, kettle, tea-pot, coffee-pot, etc., talking my finest French all the time. It was a great effort: I ran through 300 francs, and another 100 to-day, but we're still solvent, and have done ourselves very satisfactorily in spite of all difficulties.

I've been trying to play a bit to-night; the piano is not too bad, or at least might be worse: but, alas! I can't remember a single complete tune, except for the Chopin Impromptu that I had well by heart just before coming out: it's irritating remembering only odd scraps, but I think perhaps some of the rest will return with playing. . . .

The news from the wonderful show down south seems very good, and it's really a big success this time—I wish we'd been in it. Have you yet realized why Lloyd George said so openly that we were taking over more line from the French? It requires deep thought.

On November 20 the Third Army, under General Byng, attacked the enemy on a ten-mile front from Hermies to Gonnellieu, and on the next evening were within three miles of Cambrai. On the 23rd they captured Bourslon Wood and Bourslon, which were recovered by the Germans on December 4 and 5, and the British line was forced back beyond Marcoing.

To his father—

December 6.—The news to-night is so sad that one's hardly the heart to write, nor can one really express what one feels about it; and then one knows so little really. Certainly it's a very great triumph for the old Bosch, and should convince even the war correspondents of his immeasurable greatness. The sneer in yesterday's *Times*¹ at 'Hindenburg and the faithful Ludendorff in his train' filled me with fury; and it's a pity the joy bells were ever thought of—they're a pretty bad omen at the best of times and very unnecessary.

To his mother—

December 14.— . . . We are making great preparations

¹ In a leader, December 4.

for Christmas Day here. Our own dinner, in which both messes will be together, will be more or less like any good English Christmas dinner, with turkey and plum-pudding as the main items. For the men there is to be dinner at 4 P.M. (a good classic hour, isn't it ?) of which the features will be a whole roast pig and two barrels of beer : about ninety of them there are to be feasted. This will be followed by a concert, and when they are well on with this we shall leave them for our own entertainment. They have asked for breakfast from 9 to 10 A.M. that day, and the General has approved. So the Bosch will be having a quiet time if he likes to leave us alone ; and I daresay he'll be enjoying himself similarly with sauerkraut and lager, or whatever it is. We hear they're getting good rations now.

. . . It's not encouraging to feel, however wrong the impression or self-righteous the appearance, that in this war ideals are rather at a discount. I daresay too you're right about keeping a serene spirit and leaving these things in better hands, only that won't cover everything, will it ?

[He had received Henry James's 'Altar of the Dead' as a Christmas present.] Most of it I have read to-day and like immensely ; there's such a tremendous atmosphere about it that one forgets all one's own small things. . . .

To his mother—

December 18.— . . . We are proceeding apace with our arrangements for Christmas. On Friday, while proceeding in a car to a brewery, about ten miles back, to buy a barrel of beer for the men, we were solemnly bombed by a Bosch plane—six small ones all round and really quite close, but as soon as we got the headlights out all was well. However, by next summer (I'm afraid what Lloyd George said was very true) this sort of thing will be getting past a joke.

. . . It's difficult at present to know what wishes to send for next year, for it's now, I think, perfectly clear that the war cannot finish in 1918, and, what's fortunately beyond our realization at present, that in all probability the casualties and damage already suffered by all the belligerents will be small compared with what's now coming.

So that a happy New Year is rather a farcical wish, I'm afraid.

You know how much I shall be thinking of you all on Christmas Day—the first I've ever been away, and not had a stocking.¹

Writing to his sister on December 21 he mentions 'Really Xmassy weather'; an inch of snow, and the long lines of trees, which are the main feature of these parts, covered with hoar-frost, and 'fairylike.' The moat surrounding the house is frozen over, and the farm children sliding round and round it.

To his mother—

December 26.— . . . We had quite a good day yesterday. In the morning I went down to see some O.P.'s which cover one of the most historical parts of all our line in France. We had a wonderful view, and I went with a fellow who thoroughly knows the country. I could see almost exactly the spots where Heath and Oliver [Beer] were killed, and where the Battalion twice was more or less obliterated—now it's a marvellous place, looking really like what one pictures a battlefield to be, utterly waste and dead and haunted.

In the evening the men had a concert, and then at 8.15 we had our own dinner, and a very happy one too—we kept it up with the piano till 1.30 or nearly, and we got the General to dance.

¹ At Somerville Hospital in 1915, Christmas stockings were provided for the patients by the hospital staff.



CHAPTER VI

IN FRANCE, JANUARY TO AUGUST 1918

FROM December 31, 1917, to January 14, 1918, Saumarez was on leave—at home, at Oxford, and with his cousin, Miss A. M. Routh, at Haslemere. After a long and very roundabout journey, in very wet weather, he arrived at the new quarters in a chateau¹ near Estaires about midnight on January 15. He found very little to do, and the weather ‘too appalling for words, with endless slush and much flooding.’

To his father—

January 17, 1918.—They’d only been in two days, so were not much settled down: and, owing to the thaw, lorries are as much as possible kept off the roads, so that one can’t get things much, wood especially for fuel being more precious than gold, and also the rations are steadily resolving themselves into bully beef and biscuits, so that the rosy pictures I drew, at which your mouth watered, are at the moment rather in abeyance. . . .

The piano is a sad disappointment: it appears that Madame’s daughter, who was a great musician, died: whereupon Madame removed all the hammers from inside and thereby effectually preserved the sainted memory—a curious method, I think. This afternoon, however, Gribble and I went and had tea in the town [Estaires] where there is a piano in quite a nice little private room—we played the Hungarian dances and the Unfinished with much gusto, and greatly enjoyed it.

I have to-day discovered that I am now drawing nearly £50 per annum pay *less* than the newest commissioned subaltern under the present rate! This really seems rather scandalous, and I am writing a solemn letter to G.H.Q. pointing out that really, if they want competent

¹ Blown up by the Germans before their retirement in October 1918.

people of some seniority for this job, they'll not get them by forcing them to sacrifice £50 per annum.

To his mother—

January 20.— . . . Coming on leave made me forget all about the war as it really is, and until to-day I hadn't remembered. This morning, however, a large Bosch gun started performing in the neighbourhood of a battery and hit their billet, a solid, comfortable farmhouse in which, of course, the inhabitants were carrying on, as is universal in this quiet part. Only material damage was done; but, going up there with another fellow a few minutes afterwards, we found the people, a man and two or three women, in a sad state, and no wonder, seeing how narrow a shave they'd had. The man was so much shaken as to be almost hysterically cheerful, but his wife went about heaving deep sighs as she looked at the mess, and suddenly turning on me said, with what seemed to be suppressed fury, 'Ce n'est pas bon, mettre vos canons tout tout près de ma maison.' Poor things, it's so obvious they ought to clear out, and one admires them for not doing so: yet it's easy to understand their reluctance: they ought, of course, to be cleared out from the whole countryside, and that will come, I suppose, before the spring is out, for there can only be constantly increasing ruin and desolation in these parts, obviously: but it strikes one rather cruelly on these occasions: and everybody's impotence either to avert the original calamity or to mitigate it when it does come, and most of all the inequality of the suffering, make me very savage. . . .

To his father—

January 23.— . . . On Monday I went out all day with the Colonel, climbed two enormous church towers and a 70-foot ladder, walked miles at a terrific speed, and in fact haven't yet recovered, but it was very good for me. . . .

To his sister—

January 30.— . . . I was nearly run over by an aeroplane this afternoon. Walking peacefully on a road just past an aerodrome, I saw a machine landing at what

appeared an excessive speed, coming straight towards the road. I leapt aside as it smote a pile of stones, jumped the road, and fell nose first into the ditch on the further side, where it stood firmly in the mud and perfectly upright. . . . [The pilot] wasn't the least bit hurt, but rather surprised, and said he'd lost his head completely on landing. . . .

To his mother—

February 24.— . . . To-day for the first time since returning I've been to church [at Bailleul] with the Colonel this morning. It was in a battery billet: I don't know if you remember my being seedy when I first came out and having a few days more or less on the sick list on coming out of the line for the first time; but it was in a house almost next door to the place where we were this morning, and the change was more than remarkable: then crowds of civilians, shops, a good bed with sheets, etc., etc.: now broken windows, masses of rubbish everywhere, and all the horrible debris of jerry-built civilization. . . .

To his mother—

March 3.— . . . My standard of dining has rather changed—not as regards my desires, for I don't really rejoice in large meals, but as regards what's possible in this benighted country—by having dined with the Battalion on Thursday evening. They were not in the line of course, but still nearer than we: it was a guest night, their Brigadier and Brigade Major being also invited. And it really was a marvellous performance. I really don't know when I've dined so, for even Trinity was not like it. We started with oysters—no joy to me, but still not too appalling this time,—then soup, fish, veal cutlet, joint with very beautifully chipped potatoes, a wonderful sweet of candied fruits, sponge cakes and alcohol, champagne of course, a savoury, port and coffee! The only thing omitted was a cigar! All through dinner the band played,¹ a most extraordinarily good band too, raised and trained in the

¹ This was at Fleurbaix, and on June 2 he writes: 'I now spend a good deal of time in studying the environs of that delightful village in which lie the ashes of the instruments.'

Battalion under not very easy circumstances. One of the waiters was in my platoon from the start; but unfortunately I didn't get a chance to speak to him. They drove me home in the mess-cart behind the same old horse we had at Aldershot.

. . . I saw a 'Continental Times'¹ to-day, and it's a most lamentable production, very unworthy of Bosch ability. There was a whole paragraph about 'artilleristic efforts' which amused me, and the English in general was atrocious.

To his sister—

March 10.—The day before yesterday I went up and assisted at the examination of several more Bosches. They were a mixed lot, containing some very different types, on the whole pleasant, especially one charming little Rhinelander who was born merry.

To his father—

March 14.— . . . We are on the old game again, and are up every third night, which is a bit of a job, especially as we are at present worked off our feet all day. To-day I have put in twelve hours' hard work, going at top speed all the time, and being interrupted a good deal of it to show Generals photographs and that sort of thing, in compiling a lengthy document with lots of figures in it. However, when I took it to the General to sign, he said he didn't suppose most Corps produced such able work: so I was comforted.

We were shelled yesterday by an enormous gun: a good deal of damage was done to civilians. The inhabitants take this very hard (not unnaturally), this place having been very much favoured hitherto. Our office is at present in the dining-room of the house; it's a very large room rather well (though cheaply) panelled, and with large glass doors opening into a big conservatory. Every noise made on the front for miles around agitates the glass, which rattles and clatters in the most trying way; and as the noise is fairly continuous it is most unpleasant. But it's a good room. In one corner, half hidden by our maps and litter, stands the very dejected disembowelled

¹ A German propagandist sheet in English.

piano, concealing its dishonour under a hideous red cover. When a shell bursts nearer than usual, though quite a long way off (a mile or more), some of the glass falls out. The whole place is about as warlike as the poor old Madame its owner. . . .

The great German advance towards Amiens and the retreat of the Fifth Army under General Gough began on March 21. On March 24 Saumarez writes to his mother: 'We might suddenly pack up and go off to join the battle—I only wish we might: or it might start up here.' They were occasionally shelled, and on March 27 he writes that they had moved into huts in the open country, their former hostess; a lady of eighty-two, having cleared out of her house in a panic.—'I shan't send you any Easter wishes, for I don't think you're likely to get desperate at the news, nor to think now of peace terms: though I'm afraid that to a large extent people at home (and indeed out here) have not been sufficiently prepared for this. . . .

To his mother—

Easter Sunday, March 31.— . . . We have had a very peaceful day, and I've done almost no work. This morning we had a service in our mess: there is a piano now, but the padre hadn't a tune book, so the only hymn I could rise to was 'O God, our help,' in which I kept getting lost. . . . It was very welcome. This afternoon I took a lorry and some servants up to the ruined city [Armentières] to get firewood. We took away considerable quantities of roof beams, etc., from a gaping ruin of a house, and very soon filled up the lorry, so we shall have plenty for a time. I thought of taking away the splintered shop front where I bought your silver goblet [for his parents' silver wedding in 1915] as a memento, but decided that there would be less risk of interference in a side street. That place is an amazing sight. . . . I wish you could see it . . . [The new quarters were not quite rainproof], and the clay is of the stickiest. Still, it is a nice place, very open and countryfied and comparatively clean: and a very handy farm produces the most excellent butter, milk, eggs, and potatoes, at prices a good deal cheaper than those in the

town, though I can't say they are exactly pre-war, with butter at 5 fr. a pound.

The Bosch advance has proved all my theories most truly, I regret to say: and while it's no time for saying 'I told you so,' one could wish that a few of the people who dogmatize in the papers, in Parliament, and the high command, would use their imagination a bit more. As to what's coming, either immediately or in the next six months, one can't very well speculate, anyway not in a letter. I certainly think in a sense this is the beginning of the end, at all events the opening of the third act; but I don't think one can necessarily expect a rapid end. I should say that although our real strength may be on the seas and in finance, our exterior lines (looking of course at the whole alliance) are an almost unimaginable burden to us against the Bosch at present, and that in any case the Bosch's power of going on attacking is, as far as one can see, conditioned only by the extent to which he can maintain his financial credit at home. And although it's doubtless true that in the first week of the battle he has not done or anything like done what he set out to do, still I think one must admit that—so far as keeping up credit at home goes—he's not done too badly. All this tends not to pessimism, which is as misplaced in studying the situation as the reverse,—*vide* some highly coloured pieces of war correspondents' stuff, etc.—but merely to waiting and refusing to be drawn. . . . I must say that I've been more encouraged by the Lichnowsky memoirs than by anything else since America came in; and I think that they are our greatest asset since the 'scrap of paper.' They prove that even Gilbert [Murray]'s rosy-coloured spectacles did no more than justice to Grey; and I dare say you will have laughed as I did at the characterization of Asquith. . . . I only wish we had Grey now.

To the Rev. A. H. Bowman, D.D. (his uncle)—

April 3.— . . . We are living a quiet and countrified existence: there's a pleasant little town a mile away with a canteen and quite good shops, but no other attractions: and we have at hand an excellent farm, which keeps us supplied with butter, milk, and eggs in apparently unlimited quantities, so that really we live better than we did when

in the town. And as the town is rapidly clearing and the shops shutting up, it is very much more satisfactory here. The service mess is also starting a garden, and is planting its first seedling to-day; but I am being lazy about it, and indeed rather doubt the value of digging over the surface of old grass land in order to plant potatoes, etc. Also I doubt so much whether it's worth while labouring at such a thankless job when it's so doubtful if one will be here when autumn comes: though no doubt that is a selfish view. I should personally prefer to cover the huts with sweet peas and morning glory, or to have window boxes; but the paternal officer who is charged with the supervision of these activities and whose telegraphic address was recently changed from 'Spuds' to 'Mangels' (that sounds terribly utilitarian, doesn't it?), doesn't deal in such pleasant and unwarlike things as flower seeds, of course. . . .

To his mother—

April 7.— . . . We had a most successful concert here last night, run entirely by the men, with the aid of some very clever professional talent from a neighbouring battery. The pianist was remarkable—a Bombardier with a B.Sc. and what not: he played a Chopin Polonaise and then (to my tearful amusement) Ascher's incredible fantasia on 'Alice, where art thou'—you know it in that old miscellaneous book of ours. . . . I am meditating a Hungarian dance duet at the next concert, but can't at present find a partner.

I got my motor-bike back to-day after having been without it for two months or so: it has been smartened up considerably, and goes well. I've also got tools, so shall be able to leap upon it and off when the Bosch comes. . . .

On April 9 the Germans, having failed to achieve their aims by driving back the Fifth Army, attacked the Portuguese troops S.W. of Armentières, and that town and Estaires next day. Field-Marshal Haig issued his order 'We must fight with our backs to the wall' on April 13. On April 15 Bailleul was captured by the Germans.

To his mother—

April 15.—I know you will have been very anxious, but I hope you will have got my two post cards all right. . . . We are all going very strong, but have, of course, moved a good many times during the last week, and our hours of sleep and food have been quite remarkable. At present, however, we have fallen right on our feet, and are in a most charming chateau, of which the people are very kind. I have a bed with sheets, etc., which is absurd luxury. We have done well with food, too, having looted a good deal. . . .

To Major Cumberbatch [from Renescure]—

April 19.—If it's an improperly long time since I last wrote, you will by now probably know that we have had a pretty useful battle in the meantime, and there's been little opportunity. It has been an exciting time. Starting on April 9, we moved five times in as many days, and are now some distance from where we started, as you may imagine. Most of the time my job has been to ride about on the motor-bike (which fortunately had just been thoroughly overhauled and has done me splendidly) getting hold of situations, etc., for the General. Of course, my proper job has been non-existent, and the Colonel kicking his heels in great sorrow. I have almost lived on the bike, and must have covered three or four hundred miles in the last week, and it has been extraordinarily interesting. You can imagine from your knowledge of the country how spectacular much of it has been from certain points, and I've had luck in that way. I had the motor-bike hit the other day, and several holes were made in the petrol tank: myself was in the ditch beside the road and had a surprising escape, but nearly died of running over plough and falling into the ditch between the rounds. However I managed to get the old thing away after a bit and pushed it wearily back, causing the Bosch to waste a number of 5·9's down the road behind me, and now it's repaired, and functioning again very freely.

I can't tell you much about the battle. . . . As far as we were concerned, of course, the main feature at the

beginning was the refugees : and their plight was heart-rending. One saw in the roads the most amazing sights—the old people and the mothers especially it was awful to watch, and there must have been many who couldn't get away. Then there were a few days during which we lived on loot more or less—very luxuriously. You can imagine the Colonel and myself at a small farm house, with a Heavy Artillery Brigade Commander inside just about to clear out and pulling out his last guns ; the Bosch machine gun fire very audible a mile or so up the road : troops going up to hold him and the wounded coming down—the Colonel and myself solemnly engaged in killing a goose. Our motives were of course patriotic, as we didn't want the Bosch to get him, and he made a very fine Sunday dinner. But you would have laughed to see the Colonel stalking him and me hitting him over the head with a walking-stick—and he had a very hard head too.

At another place we raised about a dozen fowls, tea, coffee, sugar, and other delights, also some wine, and this very gladly, as the owner (before he fled) had not been at all pleasant ; indeed had obstructed as much as possible. All the contrasts have been so strong ; our own security, and, latterly, real beds to sleep in and regular meals, while up in the line there is so much blood ; troops fighting almost single-handed for a week or even more at a go. . . . It's sad to watch the place in which we lunched burning away and being shelled to blazes, as I have the last few days.

There is very little time to read the papers. I am horrified at the idea of Irish conscription, which is exactly the same as the Bosch treatment of the Sleswigers, and the Austrian treatment of the Trentino people. It is the most obvious piece of Northcliffism the war has yet produced, and I should say easily the most disastrous.

We had of course to abandon the piano, which was very sad. I want some music dreadfully, and am more than ever becoming a grumpy old man. Write to me of the East and any magic you can find.

To his sister—

April 20.— . . . If you remember an effusion of mine which raised two guineas from the guileless and uncritical *Westminster Gazette*, the first half of the fifth

line (I think) may assist in realizing the situation. Otherwise I can't give much of a picture of conditions, either now, or as they have been during the past fortnight. As far as we were concerned it was a curious series of contrasts between our own comparative ease and luxury and the condition of the troops in front and the refugees behind. The first night I slept on a mattress shared with the Brigade-Major, with no bedclothes at all and no coat, from 3 to 6 A.M., and it was cold ; otherwise I've always had bedding, and latterly, most luxurious beds to sleep in. I don't think we ever lacked our morning foundation of eggs and bacon ; the first two or three days we only had about two meals a day, but were none the worse. The only shelling was when I had the bicycle hit, which was a *mauvais quart d'heure*, but rather ridiculous when compared with those of the troops. I think I've told you all the picturesque incidents, such as the slaughter of the goose, and the removal of sundry goods from a house now in the front line ; the rest of the picture is mainly filled by endless streams of refugees, some very ridiculous (e.g. in silk stockings, high heels, and a large proportion of Sunday hats) but most very pathetic, and some very horrible, many troops going up to the line and a good deal of blood coming down ; dead horses, ditched lorries, and roads blocked with all kinds of things.

The papers have made me more wild even than usual, and one longs to be able to tell just a little of the truth. . . . I sympathise in a way with the correspondents, having seen something of the raw material on which they have to work, and no doubt they've got to produce so much daily or starve, like the rest of us ; but the editorial comments, which are always uninstructed, and generally asinine as well from utter incapacity to imagine the situation as [from] complete ignorance of the facts, coupled with the impossibility of telling unfavourable truths, are such that I should have thought no human being could write and at the same time retain his self-respect. Perhaps they don't ; and I don't suppose, for a minute, that you'll believe me when I come and tell you a few home truths.

Our present village¹ is exceedingly peaceful, and seems some way removed from the war. We occupy part of

¹ Renescure, between Hazebrouck and St. Omer.

two chateaux, both imitation, and several bedrooms as well in the town. The chateau containing our mess is rather a good fake, with the same sort of spiral turrets as we used to see in Brittany, though the building is in red brick, of a fairly good sort, however. After all, if you are going to fake a style, I don't see why you shouldn't go the whole hog and put 1472 over the door: the one is no more a lie than the other, though a little more blatant. But when it comes to having an imitation marble fireplace and very thin unbaronial roof-beams *painted* in two colours, I rather resent the attempt to be classical. However, it is a fine room, and possesses a good oval table which takes all the nine of us together, and the like of which we shall not see elsewhere, I am afraid.

I have absolutely no news: but the time will come when in a fury I shall take up my pen (after the war) and solemnly indict British self-satisfaction and ostrichism generally.

To his mother [from Renescure]—

April 24.—I have absolutely no news to-night. There is a horrible noise going on far away, and the telephones are ringing loud and long: but we are settling down to old conditions, and for the last three days I have been working at my usual job. . . . However, I've no doubt the Bosch has many tricks in store. . . . I was afraid perhaps you'd think we'd all been captured, but I can assure you that is most unlikely, and we are both a long way back and also well provided with transport. I spent the first night of the battle, up till 2 A.M., in a dugout with the Bosch about a thousand yards away, but the bike was ready outside, and I proposed to retire when the infantry fell back in front of us: however, as this didn't happen till the following morning, I had no trouble, and the Bosch hadn't got his guns up to make things unpleasant.

The country we're in now is quite attractive, and before dinner this evening I walked in a most delightful wood full of oxlips, anemones, and periwinkles, the latter in greater quantities than I've ever seen them and of a most perfect blue: the vista also of country people getting firewood was delightful, and it's all most unwarlike. . . .

To his father—

April 28.— . . . I feel thoroughly annoyed with everything. I have very little to do, of course, owing to the weather, and there's the most tremendous battle going on—it's wretched to be so utterly out of it, and to have no prospect of ever going in.¹

I don't know what impressions you are getting of it all, but I am so disgusted by the correspondents that I can hardly read them. Apparently the one idea is to stifle the long view everywhere, and to concentrate attention on the immediate moment by putting the whole business in wrong proportion. The idea which is being deliberately developed appears to be that, despite his advance, the Bosch is still the same incompetent, ruthless, massacring slave-driver that he has always been represented as being. . . . You are hearing, and justly, a good deal of the performance of some of our divisions. I should like to tell you of two Bosch divisions with which I happen to be fairly well acquainted. They both came from Russia during the winter, and were in the line, after a month's intensive training, until the battle began. One of them, a Saxon lot mainly, was considered to be of such quality that people who knew about these things confidently said there could never be an offensive as long as the division was on that particular front; the other one consisted largely of Alsatians, several of whom deserted and said that they did not believe the troops would advance if ordered over the top.

Each of these divisions was in the show from the start, and remained on in the front line, advancing fairly steadily for nine days consecutively, a performance as amazing as it was unexpected. On several days they got no rations; many of them probably had no hot food at all most of, if not all, the time; and they lay out, of course, in hedges under a most terrific fire; at the end of it both had over fifty per cent. casualties, and in parts a good deal more. I don't quote this in order to compare it with our own stories, though it will bear comparison with most: but merely to show that one has to face the fact of the Bosch having two invaluable assets to his hand, first, a tremendous power of training his troops up to the scratch, and secondly, a

¹ The Germans had captured Mount Kemmel and Kemmel Village on April 25. Their advance was definitely checked by April 30.

moral very much heightened by his successes. There can be no doubt that what converted these bad troops—for by trench warfare standards (which are low) they were bad troops—into magnificent infantry was, first of all the exhilaration of advancing, and secondly the tremendous sense of discipline which only training gives; for you may be sure that no amount of slave-driving will hold troops together under heavy shell-fire.

I went up further forward to-day, and going into a house whom should I meet but Joseph Hunkin,¹ my godson's father, now a Major with Military Cross and Bar. We had a most pleasant talk; he's very much unchanged, and delightful. . . .

To his father—

May 8.—The country is becoming very gay with blossom and young green, and the day was summer-like, so that I was very envious of those whose work took them out of doors. We have lilac on the mess table, and I saw tulips in the garden. This garden has some very good flowers in it, good hothouses and vinery, but is rather unkempt in the ornamental parts, as is the way with the French. The garden at home must be very gay now, and I suppose the bulbs and rockery are in full flower. . . . I must make up the mess accounts and go to bed.

To his mother—

May 12.—To-day I really thought I'd done enough, so I have been out from lunch nearly to dinner time. It was a perfect spring day; the sun of the last few days (which has given me so much to do) has brought out all the trees and the young leaves in the most wonderful way, making the country look really lovely. I have also found a really attractive motor bike ride, about three to four miles along a canal tow-path, with no dust, a good surface, no traffic, almost straight, and a very pleasant view.

. . . We were all a good deal interested by the affair Maurice,² and I freely prophesied the collapse of Lloyd

¹ The Rev. Joseph Hunkin, O.B.E., M.C., Fellow and Dean of Gonville and Caius College, Cambridge.

² Major-General Sir F. Maurice's letter had appeared in *The Times* of May 7. On May 9 Mr. Asquith's motion for a Select Committee to inquire into his statements was rejected by the House of Commons by 293 to 116.

George. However, that worthy has certainly scored pretty heavily, and one can only wonder what is behind it all. . . .

To his mother—

May 15.—This is only a little line to say that as we've been unpleasantly bombed to-night I can't write in the proper place. . . . We were all in the office here, and three pretty large ones fell almost on top of one another, blowing open the door and making us all assume amazing attitudes and generally look foolish, amid a rain of falling glass. It appears to be going to start all over again, which is a bother. . . .

We've just had three more bombs and the most infernal noise going on all around—it's quite warlike. . . .

To his mother—

May 19.— . . . The pressure of work keeps up, and we do get through a good deal—this afternoon I got out in a car and we went right away to the top of the hill which I climbed with Towse in 1915, and looked at the war, and it *was* a most perfect afternoon and a wonderful view, but mostly one only gets out for an hour or so before dinner, which, these glorious days, is rather sad. The countryside is so beautiful, all the hedges lined with roses and the long grass full of buttercups, and the apple blossom just showing—it makes the war more monstrous than ever.

When I wrote on Wednesday night we had just been bombed: the process has been repeated nightly since, but not so closely, though it has been a great nuisance, depriving us of some sleep, and generally rather nerve-racking. To-night, however, there seem not to be so many [aeroplanes] over, though I hear one just coming up: but last night was an absolute record, and from about 10 P.M. to 3 A.M. the sky was thick with them. . . .

To his mother [from Wallon Cappel, near Hazebrouck]—

June 2.—I think I omitted to tell you, and surmise you haven't discovered for yourselves, that I got a 'mention' in the despatches published last week. It was a great surprise, and made me laugh considerable: but still

it has its uses : and anyway I enclose an overwhelming tribute è Coll. Ball. which will amuse you.¹

To his mother—

June 9.—[The press of work was decreased by wet weather, and he found himself 'more or less up to date, and with some spare time.']

I had a very interesting affair on Friday, assisting at the examination of a Bosch. He was practically an officer, almost at the end of his probationary period, very much fed up with the war, and quite anxious to talk. So we treated him courteously, and he was as pleasant and talkative as possible, certainly not a Hun in personality, and, *pace* Lord Denbigh and all shrieking journalists, as good-hearted and sensible as any of us. We talked for about two hours ; I couldn't understand anything like the whole, of course, but could follow a certain amount, and had the rest translated. He had been in my line of business to some extent, and knew about a particular branch of artillery intelligence of which in the Bosch army we naturally don't know very much, as one so rarely gets prisoners who've been in that sort of job. All his experience, however, was acquired in Russia, where conditions were not very comparable to those here, so it was more interesting than useful in some ways ; but by explaining the working of our own system to him we got him to compare his own and to give his views, which were impartial and well considered. He came from East Prussia, and, I should think, was a village schoolmaster or some such thing. . . .

To his mother—

June 16.—It's nearly 2 A.M., but to-night I must confess to having sat up for no other purpose than to read a novel—'Conrad in Quest of his Youth.' I haven't done such a thing since I came to France, and haven't looked at a book since the winter, so I have enjoyed and criticized it enormously. In any case I had to sit up, as

¹ 'The Master and Fellows desire to record their congratulations to Lieutenant James Saumarez Mann, 6th Battn. Royal West Kent Regiment, on his being Mentioned in Despatches, and to thank him for the distinction which he has brought to the College.'

I'm on duty and things sometimes happen. . . . It is very amusing and very silly. Why Barrie should labour to puff it so I know not, but it's clever and good writing—but so pre-war !

He went to see the battle (in the Forest of Nieppe) with a brother officer at daybreak on June 29: 'We had a good view, but I think I hate spectators at these loathsome affairs.' On that evening, while on duty, he had a sharp attack of influenza, and was sent off to Hardelet Plage to recover. He writes thence to his mother on July 7:

It is extraordinarily pleasant, doing absolutely nothing except sitting in the sun and bathing: the time drifts by unnoticed, and at every opportunity I go off to sleep! . . . On Friday a picnic was produced. There is a similar sort of establishment for convalescent nurses, so we amalgamated and went into the woods and had tea. [The nurse next to him turned out to be a sister of an Oxford friend.] The place itself is like all collections of French villas, with enormous sands and a tide going out about a mile. The bathing is, however, very clean and warm: away to each side there are cliffs, but the immediate fore-shore is sand dunes, with woods at the back. I have bathed twice to-day and was only prevented from a third entry by the extreme distance of the tide and the heat. . . . After bathing, one lies on the most delicious warm sand and dozes.

On July 10 there was a dance, but only eight ladies were produced (Church Army workers and W.A.A.C.'s from Boulogne), Nurses and V.A.D.'s not being allowed to dance.

To his mother—

July 22.— . . . I have been set a puzzle by a scholar of my acquaintance, now at the squadron. Here it is, for your amusement:

Mens mala mors intus malus actus mors foris usus
Tumba puella puer Lazarus ista notant.

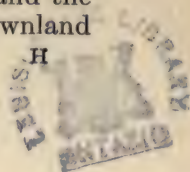
It is mediæval and genuine: and was set in a Cambridge scholarship by Montague James to be punctuated and translated. It utterly beats me at present. . . .

To his mother—

July 28.— . . . In anticipation of my coming I should like you to order for me the following necessities, to replace what I lost to the Bosch in April. They are Debussy's 'Estampes,' the Peters edition (if procurable) of the Brahms Hungarian dances, Masefield's 'Sea Fever' (the song), and Moussorgsky's 'Serenade of Death.' . . . You are terribly busy, and I wonder how on earth you manage it all. The Girl Guides especially seem a large order, and I hope you aren't working too hard. The accounts of the garden do make my mouth water. There is a fair amount of fruit in this country, and any quantity of vegetables : but somehow we don't seem to get very much of it. In the forward areas, where the people have cleared out, one can live very well ; but here, of course, we live amid dire threats if anything disappears, which, I regret to say, does happen sometimes. But in any case the people go in much more for vegetables than fruit ; one sees no raspberries and very few apples or plum trees ; which is all very creditable, but rather too severely utilitarian. . . .

To his mother—

August 5.—My Sunday letter again got pushed out, but this time it wasn't my fault. . . . On Friday the Colonel came back from leave and brought with him Sandford, the Major whom we had on the coast, and from whom I learnt originally about photographs. He spent Saturday here and . . . had some very interesting things to tell us. Yesterday the Colonel sent him off to his battery in the car ; and this being at exactly the opposite end of the front from ourselves, it was a long journey. He asked me and another, who in private life is a Winchester master and a New College man of about Heath's time, to go with him. . . . We started at 8, and got down there—about ninety miles—to lunch. We had an ancient Ford and a most incompetent driver, but the roads are good, and there was not much traffic. I was immensely interested in seeing all that historic country, and it was a good day. All the names have an extraordinary feeling about them, and the country in itself is very beautiful, great broad downland



covered with cornfields. We looked up an old friend for tea, dropped the Major, and started back about 5 P.M. We had no lights, and it was a very dark night, so for the last three hours we had to run on low gear, and even then got into a ditch once and got lost several times. However, we got here just after 1 A.M. I must say the journey back was rather weary, but it was a good day and very well worth it. I should have liked more time really to see it, but I got an idea of that old battlefield that I shan't forget. . . .

To his father [from Wallon Cappel]—

August 15.— . . . I don't think I've ever told you how very beautiful our situation is here. The country is very highly cultivated, of course, but we stand well in the middle of a fairly open plateau, the country undulating gently around rather in a Kentish way, and all golden with corn: fairly well wooded too and exceptionally rich and peaceful. We have a distant view of the most famous hill in the war and a very fine view of two other familiar hills, both of which stand magnificently and look twice their height by the contrast. The lanes are extraordinarily beautiful, very much of the Sussex variety, and far away to the South a line of hills which I see from my bedroom window is very like the downs as seen from Ide Hill [near Sevenoaks]; only that there is a black country in between.

I haven't described our generous hosts either, nice people whom I think we don't treat at all with due deference. But they require a long story, and I will tell you about them when I come home. It's very sporting of them to stay, as we get bombed a little—mainly due to the disgraceful amount of light we show, and against which they unavailingly protest—and might some day get shelled, but don't at present.

CHAPTER VII

FROM WAR TO PEACE, AUGUST 1918 TO FEBRUARY 1919

SAUMAREZ came home on a fortnight's leave at very short notice on August 19, in time for his sister's holiday from war work at the Foreign Office. His uncle, the Rev. Arthur Bowman, D.D., was in charge of Sandringham and two adjacent parishes during the Vicar's absence on the Western front: and, after a pleasant week-end at West Newton Vicarage, amid the heather and fir woods of the King's private estate, the party went on to the Norfolk Broads. At Stalham a 'houseboat,' the *Spray*, with three cabins and a forecastle, had been secured by telegram; a small sailing dinghy went with it, and Saumarez, with his usual knack of acquiring new arts, picked up the elements of boat-sailing in the first afternoon. The 'houseboat' was moored alongside a swampy and pathless reed-bed below Sutton, close to the waterway to Stalham Staithe: and with Saumarez as head cook and head boatman, the family spent five days sailing and rowing on the Ant and Bure, across Barton Broad and down to St. Benet's Abbey.

After a prolonged picnic, delightful in spite (or because) of unsettled and squally weather, with occasional exciting episodes on Barton Broad in a stiff breeze, they came home on August 31. Saumarez returned to France via Folkestone and Boulogne on Monday, September 2.

On August 21 a new Allied offensive had begun. Albert had been captured on August 22, Péronne on September 1, and the key position of the Drocourt-Quéant line, itself the key of the Hindenburg line, on September 2.

He wrote to his mother—

E.F.C. Officers' Rest House and Mess (Boulogne), September 3.—This is meant to be a birthday letter, though I'm afraid it is rather belated. But I send you very many

happy returns of to-morrow. . . . I tried to get you a Primus stove yesterday, both as a souvenir and because of the coal and gas shortage, as I think it might be useful: but alas! they're not to be had now for love or money. So I had to content myself with a heavy book [Professor Ramsay's 'Pauline and Other Studies'], which, however, looks interesting and I think you haven't read. . . .

. . . Our houseboat seems very far away now, and I don't at all like the prospect of the future with nothing much to look forward to for months. . . . However, I suppose in a week I shall be as ever. But leave throws one so violently out of it, especially a holiday so entirely delightful as ours.

In the evening he wrote again (from Wallon Cappel).

A line to say that I have arrived safely. Just after writing to you this morning I found a car going to Calais, so I took it—a very beautiful drive. From there I got a train on this afternoon, and I got up here about 6.30, so it was not so bad as I had expected.

We move on to-morrow to the edge of the devastation,¹ where a more or less complete house containing a kitchen and three rooms has been discovered: we shall live in tents, I suppose, but it will probably not be for long, and I shall not be surprised if we are within call of the potato patch² in a week or so. I'm afraid our fresh butter, eggs, and milk will all be things of the past and that as the winter comes on we shall be remarkably uncomfortable; however, it's better than moving the other way. We're not very busy, as of course this particular work needs a certain amount of permanence; and the main occupation is to go round the part I showed you and see how accurate our work has been. This appears to be most interesting and rather gruesome. . . . Many happy returns of to-morrow, and don't I wish we were going sailing.

September 8 [Pradelles].— . . . The weather is horrible and the country perfectly loathsome. I wandered round a good deal of it this morning and yesterday, and each time came back with the feeling you have on waking up from

¹ To Pradelles, about a mile west of Bailleul.

² See letter of April 3, 1918.

a nightmare. The pictures give one only the faintest glimmering of the actual facts; smells, horses and men dead for months, destroyed wagons, and everywhere as far as one can look a howling wilderness; and the same repeated *ad infinitum* and still to be repeated—it's fantastically incredible and too horrible to imagine. . . .

To Major Cumberbatch [from near Steenwerck, between Bailleul and Armentières]—

September 13.— . . . Here I am back in the mud, and very low in my mind too, what with muck and rain and the most appalling and senseless devastation all around. . . .

Oh leave was a joy, but it seems a very distant dream now; we had five days on the Broads near Stalham in a houseboat, and as I sailed on Barton in a dinghy, I felt again that things might after all be worth while and that the clouds could break. . . .

Well, here we are again very much where we started from, but my goodness what a difference! The place [Armentières] where we used to lunch is a stinking nightmare, utterly unrecognizable even as to the square. I am doing a lengthy research into the effects and accuracy of our work, which means wandering all around the devastation and looking for the hits, and it is nasty. I am in a furiously pacifist mood these last few weeks: and though I suppose my attitude is in the last resort simply intransigent and therefore not constructive, I just can't see anything but evil in the saddle and becoming more firmly seated everywhere, and so it doesn't seem much use thinking at all, which is hateful. . . .

To his mother—

September 15.— . . . The weather at last seems to be settling down again, and this afternoon was quite beautiful, and very hot, which is a blessing as in this part things want drying up dreadfully. The change in my status has come about more or less, but not quite as I expected, and pending a reply to some questions I have asked, it is quite uncertain whether I shall stay on or not. If I do, however, I shall be a Captain, probably wearing artillery badges, with £400 a year, which of course is ludicrous overpayment; shedding my green and not assuming red, as apparently they dread

the criticism that there are too many Staff Officers rather than the risk of overpayment. . . . I am very doubtful for myself whether to stay on, if the war ends next year, well and good : if not, *quousque* ? . . .

Meanwhile the work of writing our story goes on : each day we go round and tot up the results of our destructiveness, marking as 'satisfactory' ! or otherwise the most indescribable horrors : and in a few days more I hope to get it all printed and done with. The last few days this walking round sodden and destroyed country has been a gloomy and tiring job ; the desolation is quite incredibly complete, and there is solid evidence in the way of broken wagons, dead horses, scattered ammunition, and graves everywhere ; and the work in which one always had a certain pride and interest becomes on these terms as unholy a business as the rampaging of civilian Never-Endians. And it is for this that my conclusions will be styled 'very satisfactory.'

I gnashed my teeth to-day on reading in *The Times* the list of Moïsewitch's concerts for the autumn—all the things I most dreadfully want to hear being done and a whole autumn season coming on, and not a hope !

. . . You will have seen that we've got Fosse and Le Drocourt and the Railway Triangle again, nearly where Heath and Oliver [Beer] were killed and a name of horror in the old days—grim and hideous in peace time, and in war intolerably hateful. I was there on Christmas Day in an O.P. in Cambrin looking at it.

. . . I wish we were on the *Spray* again. By the way, to-night a band started playing hymns in the next field here, and after two or three bad ones suddenly came to 'Aberystwyth.' They played pretty badly, but this tune was a great joy to me—it is beautiful.

To his mother—

September 23.— . . . The 'book' is not finished yet, alas ! but will be in two or three days, I hope ; it pursues its ponderous course, but all the walking is now finished, for which I am exceedingly thankful, and it is merely a matter of devilling up old records, etc. It will take about a dozen typewritten foolscap sheets, and I don't suppose many people will read it ; I shall keep it as a curiosity,

illustrated perhaps, or give it to the safe custody of Jenkinson when the war is over—he loves all that sort of thing. . . .

To his mother—

September 29.— . . . The screed is finished, printed, and out of my hands. I am rather proud of it, and shall be amused to show it to you some day. As the matter is rather lengthy and in parts of purely technical interest, being as remote from any popular idea of war as, let us say, *The Times Literary Supplement* is from the rest of *The Times*, . . . I have made a valiant but perhaps misguided attempt to infuse into the dry bones of official statement what is meant to be a breath of literary finish; and indeed expended a great deal of pains and indiarubber on my peroration; which is intended to be grimly moving, but it may be, succeeds only in sounding affected. However, I am prepared to back my composition as more lucid and less journalistic than most official documents: though I am compelled to admit its heaviness. The difficulty of course is that, the facts being incomplete, all conclusions are either negative or else purely inferential, and must therefore be heavily guarded. . . .

A further reason for joy to-day is of course the news,¹ which is extraordinarily good. From our point of view, of course, any advance means a reduction of the amount of work to be done, which may be almost complete; and this leaves one very much in the cold when good things are in progress. Still, at present there is enough to go on with, and the possibilities opened up are tremendous. . . .

To his mother—

October 6.— . . . I shan't write about the amazing news of the Bosch peace offer,² which has come with shock to us all to-day. Of course my opinion about it is shared by no one here, and I am not very happy about it altogether. One knows too little of the details to gauge its sincerity, though the complete volte-face is in itself pretty

¹ The British and Belgian advance began September 28 on a front from Dixmude to Ploegsteert. Two days earlier the French and Americans had advanced in the Argonne.

² The Note sent by the new German Prime Minister, Prince Maximilian of Baden, to President Wilson, asking that negotiations for peace should begin.

striking and at all events leads to some discussion among people which may probably clear their minds. . . . What makes me miserable is the universal serene determination to give the Bosch back a bit of their own hell, the frank avowal that when dealing with Huns the Beatitudes are a back number, which is entirely intelligible as a human sentiment, and almost inevitable in a Belgian, a Frenchman, or a Serb, but as a preparation for any sort of a brighter future is unspeakably disastrous. But it is a fact out here that its appalling significance is as little realized as its 'righteous anger' is universally applauded: and when I see that in England an Englishman has been given three months' imprisonment for giving a parcel of food to a Bosch prisoner without a voice being raised—where are the clergy?—I think the spirit there is much the same. And all with the best intentions!

I have no news at all. Thank you for a very good letter. Of course I shall go on complaining to you, nor did I ever think you were an unsympathetic or non-understanding audience. Only because these horrible passions, which are stalking everywhere under the guise of righteous indignation, don't find any place at all in your hearts, you don't seem to me to realize how completely they've got hold of—well, at all events most of the people I meet, and certainly most of the public speakers who get reported in the papers. 'Trust Wilson' is the only cry to reassure, and even now I've grave doubts as to whether the fourteen points (which many didn't take the trouble to read when they appeared) are adequate to bring home to the Bosch a sense of his crimes.

There now I've written a lot about it, and I really didn't mean to, hating the whole business and my own inability to foam at the mouth as others do, and having nothing whatever constructive to offer.

. . . It's cold, but we've got a large supply of fuel from ruins, etc., and are exceedingly snug in consequence. I'm afraid you must all be rather miserable in the evenings. I have borrowed Q's [Sir Arthur Quiller-Couch's] 'Studies in Literature,' and find it very attractive, though his humour is sometimes a little irritating in its puerilities. But perhaps I am over-irritable—in fact I seem to be becoming an old gentleman rather fast!

. . . A second edition of the great work is in the press, as the demand for copies is rather high ! It makes a unique type of souvenir, which accounts for this demand more than any intrinsic value of the information given.

To his mother—

October 13.— . . . I have just been reading ‘Foe-Farrell,’ and expected just to find an ordinary good novel, instead of which it is easily a masterpiece and worthy of Conrad at his deepest—a really magnificent book. Do read it if you haven’t : the moral indignation note in literature is either so conspicuously ridiculed or so crudely overworked at the present time (compare Wells with Compton Mackenzie, for extremes) that when made a work of art it is wonderfully attractive.

For a Sunday walk I went this afternoon down to our old home. The Bosch took away all the huts except my office, which he used as a stable,—it’s a good deal damaged—and the General’s motor-house. The sites are overgrown, and it looks deserted ; about where I judged the middle of the potato patch should come there was a single shell-hole, but no sign of any cultivation. The huts stood under rather a fine row of trees, which have escaped injury, and in their autumn colouring looked very dignified ; but it was a dreary day, and the spot was very different from its old self. . . .

Papa was quite right about the ridge [Messines] : I was up there again yesterday in a Scotch mist, and it was an incredibly grim prospect. . . .

The British forces had entered Cambrai on October 9, and Le Cateau on the day following. On the 17th they captured Lille and Douai. He writes to his mother two days later (October 19) from Ploegsteert Wood :

. . . We are having the most thrilling times here. At the moment I am writing from a tent in the wood where I first started my experience out here in 1915 ; but to-morrow we move on to an enormous chateau, not unlike Buckingham Palace, near the three cities. I haven’t seen it yet, but they tell me there are greenhouses full of ripe figs and all sorts of wonderful gardens, and the place is all untouched, of course, and full of civilians.

I had the most moving experience of any one the day before yesterday. I was sent up on the bike to see about bridges, etc., and pushed on rather further than was intended. I wanted to get into a place which is almost a suburb of the city [Lille], and, after carrying the bike over some big craters in the road and a broken bridge, got there, to find, to my complete amazement, that it was full of civilians and that I was the first person from this side to get in there; the Bosch having cleared out five or six hours before. It was tremendous, of course: coffee and a marvellous liqueur were produced, and I told them all the news of the war, including some that I found was true only when I got back in the evening. They all talked at once of course, smiling all over, and it wasn't easy to get much definite idea of the Bosch regime, etc. I will write you all about it later when we have had more talk with them, after to-morrow. They looked wonderfully healthy, I must say; all of course in their best clothes and very smart, and the town all gay with flags.

Yesterday the General and I drove through one of the cities [possibly Lille]: this was like being the King; crowds lined up on each side, cheering and waving flags: we dared not stop, for once in the crowd it was impossible to get out again; everybody shakes hands at once, and it's impossible to avoid being kissed if you stay at all. It's all incredibly moving and unforgettable: I can't describe it a bit, but the joy of all faces, the waving of flags and cheering, and the general sense of deliverance, are perfectly overwhelming.

To-day I thought it only fair to lend my bike to someone else and stay at home. Two of them went on bikes to one of the cities, where they had a tremendous time, being fed and given drink, and got the most priceless souvenir, of which I must try to get a copy later, the first newspaper printed there since October 1914, announcing the Bosch departure and our entry. Clémenceau was there, and the Army Commander, and tremendous harangues were in progress.

I have spent the day in changing my badges, as I am now a Captain and again wearing regimental badges, being out of the Intelligence Corps. It is antedated to June 4, so I am exceedingly wealthy, at £400 a year and £50

allowances. I shall stay on here at present, at all events, as the war may be over—by Christmas we shall be able to judge.

. . . I have described it all very skimpily, but the gramophone is going and we are all excitedly discussing experiences—but it is all very wonderful.

To his father (from Mouveaux, near Tourcoing)—

October 22.—I am writing in a room which might well be in [his uncle's] Merton house, except that it contains a piano and no books; but in general style the resemblance is quite great. So you can imagine our comfort: we all live here and have our mess. The only trouble is, there's nothing whatever to do: there's an office, but nothing in it, and not likely to be just yet; and we are not used to resting out here. We move on a few miles to-morrow to another even more beautiful house [at Lannoy]: this contains a grand piano reckoned to have cost about 200 guineas and in excellent condition, so they tell me—I haven't seen it yet.

But we look like being fairly comfortably housed for the rest of the war at this rate. Of course there is nothing to buy in the shops; and no butter, eggs, or milk, as the Bosch has taken away every item of live stock, even to the pet dogs. The people are living on vegetables, and have hardly tasted meat this year: one sees dead (Bosch) horses by the roadside, from which joints have been cut by civilians, which are pretty eloquent testimony. The Dutch-Spanish (late American) Relief Committee appears to have worked admirably as far as it could, and the people say that on the whole their food was better than that of the Bosch troops.

One hears everywhere the sort of stories you are reading in the papers; the upshot of which is that individuals on the whole behaved well, but that the system and the general attitude of officials was unspeakable. One man told me dreadful stories of gangs of prisoners working behind the line, he having been forced to work with them, and he said simply, 'Ils sont impitoyables, Monsieur.'

I have got some rather good souvenirs, and shall raise quite a collection in time. It's amusing as you walk down

the street, but a bit of an effort. The children run up and shake hands, or walk hand in hand with one: the men mostly take off their hats, and the women beam all over. This will soon wear off, I expect: they have a good deal to worry about still, with the vast majority of their men carried away, not much to eat, little prospect of factories, etc., getting going very soon, and some uncertainty owing to a series of things blowing up at odd moments, which seems likely to continue for a bit, and is a peculiarly beastly form of warfare. But their joy is very sincere.

We took our trip to the coast¹ yesterday, and it was most interesting, but we hadn't very much time. We saw the *Vindictive's* funnels and masts, and heard about it from a civilian there: and we went to see some of the old gunpits we had shot at so often—and they were amazingly strong. The whole line of dunes is one solid concrete fort most amazingly well done, all lit by electricity and very comfortable.

Here is a list of things which I want Mamma to send me. First of all some music, to wit, Peer Gynt, Liszt's *Liebestraum* (if discoverable and not bound up), the Gopak, and for duets (as I now have a fellow-player) the Schubert C major and Unfinished, and the first volume of Beethoven's Symphonies. . . .

To his mother—

October 27.— . . . No, I am not a Staff Officer, in appearance at all events: for, as I told you, the powers fear popular uninstructed criticism so much that they find it simpler to give us the pay than the red tabs. So I appear merely as a common Captain in the R. West Kent Regt., which is a much better thing, the red being as bad for one's morals as it is detested by the troops. . . .

I started the French class yesterday, and have twelve students, from the Sergeant Major down to the General's chauffeur. They are very keen at present, though I dare say it won't last; but it is a great interest to me, and I shall enjoy it if they will remain so. You might send me a French grammar as soon as possible, as I am a bit rusty

¹ Ostend had been occupied by the Dover Patrol on October 17. Saumarez went with his Colonel.

on some of the finer points, particularly the subjunctive mood, and they will start asking awkward questions very soon. I am making up my own course, conversational as far as possible, and trying to avoid arid stretches of grammar such as prevent schoolboys from ever acquiring the least enthusiasm for the language. I hope the music is on its way: the grand piano in this house is very delightful. It is an Erard, not loud and with a very light touch, which gives away blunders very badly, and is particularly difficult when one is out of practice, but the tone is beautiful. I have borrowed (from a local priest) a volume containing the first few of the Beethoven sonatas, and am practising them quite hard, as I have a good deal of time.

We are getting to work again, however, but, of course, are hampered a good deal by the weather. . . .

We went round a factory [probably at Roubaix] this afternoon with the owner, a most amusing old Frenchman who must be incredibly wealthy (to judge from his own house) in spite of his losses these four years. It is an enormous spinning factory, employing 2000 hands, and the Bosch has put almost the whole thing out of action by taking off every bit of brass fitting—knobs and handles mainly. He said, very humorously, ‘The Germans say, “If you have any brass of vich you do not tell me, you go to Germany for ten years”; so—I have no brass concealed!’ In our house they took away the entire fireplace, being brass: they seem to be shorter of this metal than anything.

Wilson’s last reply is a fine utterance, isn’t it? I should think the best thing of the kind that’s ever been, and the beginning of a new tradition of diplomacy.

To his mother—

October 31.—Thank you very much indeed for the magnificent package of music. . . . I am practising hard in consequence, and need it pretty badly! By the ‘Humoreske’ I suppose you meant Järnefeldt’s ‘Praeludium,’ didn’t you? But I don’t think I shall ever rise to that; you want ten fingers on each hand. . . . How I wish you were here to play them with!

You ask for some more experiences, but I’m afraid I haven’t any. Though I adjure my French class to practise

on the natives, I don't really get much opportunity for it myself. This house contains only caretakers : a very nice woman and a funny old man who is almost unintelligible for lack of teeth, but insisted on bringing me a hot brick this morning to put my feet on : they live in the kitchen, of course, and our servants talk to them day and night, but we don't get much chance. I haven't been into the towns a great deal, except passing through, partly because it's rather far, partly because things in the eating line are at famine prices : you pay 7.50 for four cups of coffee with sugar (sugar was at 32 fr. the kilo before the Bosch left) and anything round 15 fr. for a dinner of soup and vegetables. This will very soon change now trains are running again, but it will take a little time before one can run in for a dinner, as used to be the case at St. Omer, Cassel, Bethune, etc. . . .

You are surprised at the beautiful piano's escape from being taken to Germany, but in these parts there was no looting, I think, on any scale. All the brass has gone ; but it seems to me a much less serious offence to seize the brass than to kill the men of a country, though I know that isn't the official view. Of course individual soldiers will always loot when no one's looking and I could tell tales. What the people resented terribly was the Bosch habit of taking what he wanted in shops and giving a 'bon' for it ; but I think the average Bosch probably believed quite seriously that he would hold these parts after the war, or at all events that his paper would be honoured at the end. . . .

On November 6 Saumarez writes to his sister that he had won a bet of £5 from a brother officer, who had staked that sum in September on his belief that the British troops would not be in Lille by Christmas. 'I hoped it had been forgotten, and had forgotten myself. I should like to present it to the Mayor of Lille, but doubt if my French would rise to the composition of an adequate letter : but I think it would be amusing to try. [He sent it to the Mayor for the war victims, and received a grateful acknowledgment.] . . . The parcel came to-day from home and looks particularly good, but I am keeping it till the day. I don't at all want to be past the quarter of a century mark.'

He celebrated his birthday (November 10) in an unexpected way. He writes to his father on November 13 :

. . . We found on Saturday morning that the Bosch had gone from the Scheldt, so Paton [Captain A. Paton, R.A.] and I set off to see the other side ; we didn't do very much of great interest beyond climbing to the top of Mont de la Trinité, and seeing the view, which is very lovely, and in general looking round the country we had been shooting at. Next day, however, we decided to get further afield, so we set off early and went through Tournai to Renaix—I should say that we're living at Lannoy, a suburb S.E. of Roubaix. At Renaix we got such a reception, being almost the first troops there, with the whole population cheering and waving flags, etc., that we dared not stop : so we went right through to find the troops. We left the bikes about two miles the other side of Renaix, and walked on. Very soon we struck our infantry advancing, and almost immediately heard machine-gun fire, so we joined in with them, and cautiously led the advance over the hill and down towards a village called Ellezelles. The machine-gun fire stopped, and we went into the village to find the Bosch had left five minutes before—only a few cavalry and machine gunners. The people went mad with delight, and I was forcibly kissed on both cheeks by tearful old men who hadn't shaved for weeks about a dozen times, besides being given cigars, apples, tobacco, and drinks. However, we pushed through the village, and at the bottom of it by a turning to the right I suddenly saw three Bosches sloping down the street towards us, about three hundred yards away, quite unconscious of us. I got behind a house with my revolver and should infallibly have captured them, but an ass of a sergeant saw them, got frightened, and fired his rifle ; needless to say he didn't hit them, but they ran like blazes, and so were lost. Meanwhile Paton was pursuing other Bosches up the road out of the town and got some way when they turned a machine gun on to him and also on to me as I was following behind. He had one man with him, and I was alone : we lay in a ditch for some time and listened to the bullets cutting the trees above our heads, but eventually the Bosch cleared off, and we returned. The village was then shelled

violently for a few minutes, and we got into a cellar ; this soon stopped, however, as the Bosch wasn't anxious to wait, and we returned, getting an even more hearty welcome on the way back.

Our ride home was long and rather tiresome, being largely in the dark over craters and broken bridges, but we got in at 7.30, triumphant and weary. Altogether it was an amusing birthday, and a most suitable way of observing the last day of the war.

Now, of course, we're waiting to hear what's to happen to us. It is thought we are not to proceed in occupation of Germany, but nothing is known yet. I am hoping to see Courtrai and Tournai properly in the next few days : also perhaps Bruges ; and I am probably going to manage a week or ten days' leave seeing Nîmes, Orange, Avignon, and those parts in a few weeks, but this is all vague at present. For the moment I have to go round Bosch batteries the other side of the Scheldt and write a short account of them on the lines of the last one : this will be finished in a couple of days, and is no hardship this lovely weather, with the country looking most wonderful, but now the war is over one can't get up much enthusiasm about it. The education scheme will develop a bit in the course of a few days, but I am not quite sure yet on what lines.

It's quite impossible to realize that the whole thing's over. There was very little sign of open rejoicing in these parts—everyone is strained too dry of emotion, I think, and unable to look forward to the future.¹

Will you please ask Mamma to send me my green Arabic grammar ?

To his mother —

November 17.—I really don't think there is much to chronicle to-day except a very fine joy-ride on Friday [15th]. We started early and went straight to Zeebrugge, where we looked all round : it was a most lovely day, though very cold, and the place is extraordinarily well worth seeing, with our ships lying at the mouth of the canal and the great breach in the pier where Sandford's submarine blew up. Then we came back to

¹ The Armistice began November 11.

Bruges, where we had a bottle of wine and our sandwiches at the Panier d'Or. The Colonel had stayed there in 1905, and Madame remembered him (or professed to), and spoke in excellent English of the Bosch, whom she did not love. We had not very long here, and I only got a general view of the place; then we dashed on to Ghent, which we reached just as dusk was falling; it looked very beautiful, and gayer than any town I've seen for a long time, as the electric light is still going and the trams all running. Here again we only got a general view and a cup of coffee, and then came home in the moonlight through Courtrai, which I shall be able to examine at leisure in a day or two.

I went to a sort of Thanksgiving service this afternoon, and came away feeling more desperate than ever at the futility of army religion. In the first place of course the troops, 3000 of them, were frozen by being kept hanging about for ages on a ceremonial parade: then the prayers chosen were utterly without meaning; the lesson was the Prodigal Son, an excellent lesson but most unsuitable. Finally the address was a parallel between the men who fetched the water for David from the well at Bethlehem and the troops who won this war for King George of England! And it was preached by a really excellent padre, a man I do respect, but it just shows the hopelessly detached outlook of the Church that such a man, when he gets up to speak, should stifle himself and his audience with a lot of meaningless phrases about the King, and all the paraphernalia of an incomplete and most inadequate parallel dragged in by the ears.

It's frightfully cold and very hard on the people, who've little or no fuel, and not too much to eat.

To Miss Helen Ranken—

November 15.—I am living what you might call a thoroughly genteel life; get up not very early, do some work of my own, principally Persian, in the morning, read, talk, go out, and practise for the rest of the day, give a French lesson after dinner three nights a week, and occasionally go for a joy-ride to such places as Bruges, Ghent, Tournai, and Courtrai. I am also meditating a series of lectures (of the simplest sort) on elementary politics. A very humorous situation has arisen owing

to a great scheme which is being attempted to keep the troops going during the period from now onwards until they are demobilized by giving them some education, and among the more important subjects suggested as forming part of an elementary general education comes the word 'Civics.' 'Civics' is the horrible term nowadays applied to simple political theory, i.e. what an elector or taxpayer ought to know about the system of which he's a part. Some of our more senior and respected (?) officers don't realize this: and on hearing 'politics' mentioned they were horrified, and said that on *no* account must the troops be taught any politics at all, as this was a *most dangerous* subject. That this attitude is precisely that which produces Bolshevism of course they were blissfully unconscious; but it lends a certain piquancy to the delivery of lectures, however harmless, on anything approaching a political subject, which makes it quite exciting.

There seems to be no likelihood of my going forward with anybody who's going to occupy Germany, and I don't know that I regret this much. The experience might be interesting, and there's always a pleasure in seeing new places: but I shall not be surprised if there is a certain amount of unpleasant police work to be done, and it will in any case be considered necessary to make the troops behave as though they were on parade all the time, and as though the inhabitants belonged to a different order of humanity altogether; this I should not appreciate.

To his father—

November 20.—Very many thanks for your most interesting letter describing the peace rejoicings. We have most amusing accounts, too, of what happened in Paris: the French are certainly more able to cope with these occasions in the proper light-hearted spirit, and I wish I had seen something of it. In these parts, now that the first rejoicing is past, there is too much urgent discomfort, if not actual misery, for the people to take much notice of the occasion. Apparently there is a good deal of feeling that the French Government have not risen to the occasion in the way of supplying food, etc., and also in regard to withdrawing the local municipal money and substituting

notes on the Bank of France, about which there is much stickiness. The people have very little fuel and not very much to eat except roots; the reorganization of the factories will take a long time, the money question is pretty acute, the weather cold and raw, the trains not running, and the gas and electric light only partially in action. I don't know how far the criticism is justified; the railway problem alone, of course, is tremendous, especially now with the enormously long military communications, but I am afraid the winter will be a very hard one for them even at the best, and if the Government are not doing all in their power to relieve the immediate needs it is a bad business.

. . . The education scheme is developing slowly; I am going to try my hand at an English class, and am getting started a Spanish class and a mathematical class: also, I am perhaps going to give some highly elementary lectures on the anomalous subject known as 'Civics,' but this is a tallish order.

Will you send me out an Arithmetic and an Algebra (for the bloke who's going to take the mathematicians) if there are any left? Also, if you've got it (but I think you haven't), that amusing work entitled 'The King's English'?

To his mother—

November 25.—My trip down South has been postponed for the present, owing to the education scheme. I am now education officer for the whole corps heavy artillery, which is daily growing, and is not very far short of 10,000 men at present. The scheme is just being launched more or less generally now, and it is a pretty tall order, which, if it develops, may become an enormous and most valuable thing, but which may very easily be killed at the start and will be in many cases, I'm afraid. My own work is mainly going to be routine, and consists of issuing books, allotting vacancies for technical courses, explaining matters, and generally giving advice for what it's worth, and soon, I hope, co-ordinating lectures and teaching for the more advanced classes if possible: but units are too scattered at present, and I don't know how much of this will be possible. I am giving a series of

lectures on 'Civics' myself, and this is no small matter, with Generals and such turning purple at the mention of politics, taking the *Morning Post* seriously, and regarding labour questions as Bolshevism pure and simple—though this is not a true description of my own General's attitude.

All this, if it developes well and is not fussed too much at the start, may make my French leave impossible : for the present I have postponed it until December 8. In this headquarters I have got started, under a school-master (now a sergeant), a good-looking English class ; and shall in a few days have going Spanish (two pupils and a very good instructor), shorthand probably, and motor driving and running repairs—not bad for some fifty men : also more French and the Civics !

If I think it worth while I shall waive my claim to an early demobilization for a month or two : this will depend on the development of the scheme. Meanwhile Slig [Mr. F. F. Urquhart, Domestic Bursar of Balliol] has written me a tentative offer of work in Oxford (College unspecified). I need hardly say that, despite Maurice [Jacks]'s action, I have refused, being neither competent nor desirous of it, and not being in urgent need of funds. When I do go back, I shall certainly take Oriental languages, and as much philosophy as I can without doing Greats. I am working hard at Persian (two hours a day nearly), and am getting on rather well ; in a month I shall have what the author of my grammar describes as a thorough elementary knowledge of it, and shall then turn more deeply to Arabic.

To his mother—

December 1.—These two days I have been as busy as if there had been war again ; on education, however, which is distinctly a more profitable use of one's labour. Yesterday was mainly a matter of writing out reports, returns, etc. : to-day I have been to Courtrai to see a unit, with another at Halluin on the way back, and considerable writing to do on my return. The scheme is developing well ; we have big classes starting this week in various workshops all over the country for refresher courses for skilled men, and nearly all units have a certain amount of general education going on each day in themselves.

Courtrai is not as interesting as I had hoped ; quite an attractive town from the streets, but little more. I lunched by myself at an hotel and got a most excellent *déjeûner*, far better than in these parts, for only 5 fr. On the way back, at Halluin, I met a Merton man, who asked if I were the nephew of the Warden ! It appears he called on him in September when on leave and was told where I was.

. . . Yesterday as I was working in here the door opened and a very beautiful Frenchwoman came in and informed me she was the owner of this house ; but, rather to my relief, it was a flying visit, and she doesn't contemplate coming here until 'le printemps'—though she is very nice. Later her aunt appeared and gave her views on 'la sale race—il faut les déraciner tous, il faut les empêcher de continuer,' etc., etc. The world's at a pretty low ebb just now.

And I *do* hate this election so ! Forster alone has honoured me with his literature, and I shall *not* vote for him.¹

To his father—

December 4.— . . . I am not Education Officer to the whole Corps, but only to the Corps Heavy Artillery. You are both a bit hazy about military terms, not unnaturally, but the Corps contains at present somewhere about 80,000, I suppose, and the Heavy Artillery are about one-tenth of that. I am sending off about ninety men, or about 1 per cent. of the Heavy Artillery, to various courses on Saturday, in such things as Carpentry, Fitting, Motor Mechanics, Telegraph work, Bricklaying, Optical Instrument repairing, etc., and it is a big job collecting the necessary information, for my district extends from Bailleul to Courtrai and from Ypres to Mazingarbe, which is close to the Loos battlefield. The outlying units, however, I can do very little for ; most of my work lies in Roubaix and Tourcoing. I have been asked to start a second French class in addition, and shall do this on my return from leave. I gave my first Civics lecture on Monday, mainly about public opinion, and to my intense relief got the approval of both the General and the Colonel,

¹ The Unionist candidate for Bromley, now Lord Forster.

though of course I preached the most radical views. I think that as long as one is not questioned, one can make the most surprisingly far-reaching statements without imparting to them any party colouring, but if one were heckled, of course one would be compelled to take a side: fortunately that can't happen in a class room in the Army.

You will be amused to hear that I have been given a French Croix de Guerre, and am going to be given it tomorrow by the Corps Commander. This is purely what's called a routine medal, and you must not attach any other significance to it. As I shall also get the 1915 medal (which has the same ribbon at the 1914 star) I shall be quite decorated.

We are off [to Avignon] on Saturday, unless something unusual intervenes. . . . It will be very pleasant to see the sun again.

To his mother—

Paris, December 8.—Here we are, having really got off on our leave after all. We left at 6.30 A.M. yesterday, came by car to Amiens—through Lens, which is incredibly horrid—and got there at 11.30. We saw the Cathedral and lunched, left at 2.30, and got here soon after 5; dined and went to the Opera, which we only just got into, but which was a very great joy. . . . Paris is very full and very gay, and as a city it deserves all the praises ever spoken of it, but I am glad not to be staying here, particularly at this time of year—though it is astonishingly warm. . . .

To his father—

Hôtel de Luxembourg, Nîmes (December 11).—We are having a most splendid time, and it is such a joy to be a tourist once more. We managed to get two seats all right in the train at 9.5 P.M.: it was late and slow, and we got to Arles at 2.15 the next afternoon with only a very short wait for food at Avignon. However, we had some with us and were not uncomfortable. Arles is a most lovely old place, with the smallest and most winding streets imaginable, a magnificent amphitheatre, a Roman theatre, a twelfth-century church with a most beautiful cloister, and

several odd little relics dotted about the streets. Unfortunately we had no time to see the Museums, as yesterday morning we decided to take a carriage and go out to Montmajour, which is an ancient abbey on a hill about three miles away, and very well worth seeing. It has a particularly fascinating twelfth-century cloister, and an immensely ancient cell cut in the rock, said to be second century A.D., on to which are built successively chapels of the sixth and eleventh centuries.

We came on here in the afternoon, and have spent a wonderful day. This morning we saw the amphitheatre, the Maison Carrée, which is a Roman temple *tout entier* and contains a very good museum, besides being a most beautiful thing in itself; and then went to the Jardin des Bains, which is the Nîmes fountain and remains of the Roman baths laid out in Louis XIV's time as an ornamental garden with singularly successful results—quite one of the most delightful things to be seen. This afternoon we were extravagant, and took a car to see the Pont du Gard; it was expensive, but we have certainly not regretted it. I forget if you've ever been there, but it is simply stupendous, and more impressive as a memento of the Romans even than these amphitheatres. It is also extraordinarily complete, and one can follow the channel from the top of the aqueduct right through tunnels and cuttings for a long way, and the situation is magnificent and the stone of a wonderful golden colour owing to the iron in the water, I fancy. It really is the most magnificent sight, and I am proud to have seen it.

To-morrow morning we shall look around some museums here, and in the afternoon go on to Orange, where we spend a night. On Friday we return to Avignon, where we spend two days, getting back to Paris on Monday.

We have been in most comfortable hotels so far; the one at Arles was the regular old family affair that we've met in Brittany; this is rather grand, but exceedingly comfortable, and there is quite a good piano. . . . We get taken everywhere for Americans, which is odd; there are many of them about, of course. We live exceedingly well; there is no food shortage here, and the cooking is *à merveille*. So you can imagine that we are enjoying ourselves.

To his mother—

Hôtel d'Europe, Avignon, December 15.—We are just about to start on our homeward way, leaving here at 3 P.M., dining at Lyons, and getting into Paris about 8 A.M. It is very sad to be leaving the sun, which has shone upon us every day, this beautiful town, the best of them all in its ensemble, and the delights of travelling, to go back to northern mists, clammy pavements, and the cold. We have had an extraordinarily good trip, and have seen absolutely first-class things every day, and with the views and the sunshine and the clear air the setting has been ideal.

Orange, where we spent Friday morning, contains only two things, but both first-class and both Roman, an Arc de Triomphe and a theatre. Here at Avignon we've had two busy days, and have not by any means exhausted the possibilities. Unfortunately, a good deal of the Palais des Papes is not visible at present, being full of the *coffres-forts* of various French banks, which were brought here when Paris was threatened in June; but it's the most magnificent place. I apologise to Papa for not having visited Mill's grave, but it is some way, and not near anything good.

Last night we went to an Italian opera here; it was partly very good, and partly astonishingly bad and funny—unintentionally, of course; altogether we got a good deal of amusement from it. We have also met some amusing people, but there are very few travelling; some Americans, but on the whole surprisingly few. We met a charming old *littérateur* at Nîmes, in a café, who talked in the most delightful way about his books and the Daudets, and gave us a really magnificent little lecture on the shortness and frailty of man's life: which is not a thing you could imagine happening in Lyons' or the A.B.C. Altogether it has been splendid. I will send you my collection of photos and post cards when I get back.

To his mother—

December 22 (Lannoy).— . . . I have no news; there is a good deal to do, but only routine work mostly; I am lecturing to-morrow, and have started another French

class of seventeen members, so I am able to pass the time ; but it is not a satisfactory period when the present fails to absorb one, and the future contains nothing but terrors.

Did I ever thank you for the books ? They are a splendid lot, and most useful, and I am very glad to have them. I don't think much of [a book dealing with the elementary facts of English administration]. I suppose it is all right in its way, but my idea of Civics is not to discuss who are the Overseers or what is the function of the Lord Chancellor, but to get them considering what is one's duty to the State and what one has a right to expect from the State, which is to say political philosophy in its most elementary aspects. I am sure that this alone is of importance.

We are preparing for Christmas festivities, with a tree for the local children, dinners for the men and ourselves, and a small concert. My late Colonel is on leave, which is a pity, as this will be the last occasion and rather a pleasant party. I have spent the afternoon in writing a topical song to be sung after dinner, but it isn't very funny ; the weather, to say nothing of other things, is too depressing to be funny. . . .

The education scheme is being killed by the Army for lack of books ; their own scheme for supplying them having broken down, they offered to let four officers go home from the Corps to buy with a sum of money which works out at less than £1 per 1000 men, and this they regarded as great generosity ! Classes have been going well for five weeks now without books, and naturally people can't carry on any longer, not being themselves very up-to-date. It is so hopeless and so typical.

To his father—

December 26.— . . . We have had quite a good Christmas, and have been lucky with the weather, which has been clear and sunny, though cold. I think the men have enjoyed it ; it is very difficult to make these festivities altogether natural, particularly in the Army, and where there are no children Christmas hasn't much point. At our own dinner last night we were all rather sentimental about the approaching break-up of our party, and the General in particular was very much moved ; he made

a speech thanking us all in the most glowing terms and was very delightful, as he always is. We all made little speeches, and as most of us were here last year, naturally the events since April 9 were gone over again in some detail. After dinner, my topical song was sung and went down rather well; I would quote it, but I'm afraid you wouldn't appreciate any of the jokes, and it would be dull. After this we sang and made a noise till about 2 A.M., when we broke up in disorder.

To-morrow the men are giving a Christmas tree to about 120 of the village children, probably followed up by a dance to their big sisters; this will be the final conclusion of the Christmas festivities!

On Christmas Eve the General, the Brigade Major, and I shared a box at a variety show in Tourcoing, and afterwards dined in the Corps Commander's palatial mess; but himself was away, and there were only two quite pleasant Generals and Joe Lambart, acting A.D.C., my companion in Provence, so it was a pleasant little party.

I'm afraid I can't write and cheer you up, not having the wherewithal. This is not a pleasant time, and the sooner it's over and forgotten the better, I think. However, I don't expect that you are getting downhearted at home, for however gloomy I may allow myself at times to become, still I expect you to point out the silver lining. I am rather doubtful, however, if there is such a thing, and I think my argument that [the war] is an unmitigated disaster and not a blessing in disguise is sound—certainly, politically that is so. Well, we shall see.

To his mother—

December 29.— . . . I have proved for myself the wisdom of the man who said that it is practically impossible to teach oneself Arabic. Yesterday, when I came to the rule which states that the verb, in addition to a singular, dual and plural, has also a masculine and feminine, I nearly tore my hair; but to-day, on reading that there are thirty-one different ways of forming the irregular plural of nouns, apart from several regular ways, and in addition a plural of plurals, I merely said (in Arabic) 'Allah is great,'—and decided to devote myself entirely to Persian, which is very simple and restful. Arabic is complicated at every

turn to a most alarming degree, and I don't see how it could ever be learnt except in actual conversation, because none of the rules ever work. Moreover, none of my grammars ever transliterate any of the stranger words, which contain a number of letters purely as passengers or as representing other letters, for no visible reason : and the system of vowels is really unintelligible. I must say I think it's a monstrous language.

Our Christmas festivities went off very well, and the tree for the children on Friday was a great success ; nothing like it had ever happened before in Lannoy. Nominally 120 presents were provided, but in practice nearly 200 children must have turned up, and most got something ; also, there was plenty of cake and chocolate. Afterwards there was an attempt at a dance, which was also a great success, though none of the local fairies could dance ; so they fell to playing Kiss in the Ring, which was a huge success, and the evening went splendidly.

Well, I daresay my release will arrive in a very short time now : a startling prospect.

To his mother—

January 5, 1919.— . . . We have had two very gay evenings, for we entertained on both Friday and Saturday nights some of the artists of Lena Ashwell's party, and they *were* delightful people. We had them in the General's mess on Friday and in here yesterday, and they sang after dinner, and we all made speeches, and were very festive. We had three girls and a man the first night, and two girls and two men the second. Their concert was astonishingly good : a girl who played the fiddle, and the soprano in particular, were as good as they make 'em, and the whole thing was simply delightful. . . .

I have been listening to stories about the Bosch this evening, told in the most voluble and excited French by some very nice people who live across the road and think my French is rather good : though they told me to-night that I had a Flemish accent, but this was really meant for a compliment, as they have one themselves : the stories were familiar enough, but the telling was very vivid, often exceedingly amusing, and more contemptuous than bitter, except about the Kaiser !

To his mother—

January 13. — . . . We are very quiet at present, except that we meet the Lena Ashwell party periodically, and lunched with two of the fairies yesterday in Lille. . . . I have been asked to go and deliver one of my lectures to a Canadian Division which is living in these parts : rather an alarming prospect this, especially as I know nothing—in fact rather less—about Canadian politics. . . . I had a letter from Victor [Murray] offering me many and varied jobs under the Student Movement, but I did not accept.

To his mother—

January 28.— . . . I had a very good time indeed with Julie in Paris.¹ I got there on Thursday evening, too late to do anything, as the train was fearfully slow, so I dined by myself and went to the pictures. On Friday I lunched with her, and in the afternoon we walked in the Bois de Boulogne : in the evening we went to the Opera Comique and saw Charpentier's 'Louise,' which is a very charming opera. On Saturday we lunched together, and in the evening dined and went to the Opera, where we saw 'Faust,' magnificently done. On Sunday we went out to Versailles, which looked very fine and strange under the snow ; in the evening we dined with Arnold [Toynbee] at the Majestic—very swell—and afterwards went round to see Rosalind [Mrs. Toynbee], just returned for a few days from Nancy. So I got a good deal into my three days.

Julie is pretty busy, and seems to be enjoying herself now. The Majestic lounge is a remarkable sight, and certainly does arouse uncomfortable emotions in a mere outsider like myself, particularly on considering the fleet of priceless Rolls-Royces and Vauxhalls for ever standing outside the door. However, the members of the party known to me, namely Arnold [Toynbee], Humphrey Sumner, Daniel Macmillan, and Colonel Hedley, all seem to be fairly well occupied, in addition to Julie ; so I suppose that really they are all of some use. Rosalind is working with J. L. Hammond and his wife, who are there for the *Manchester Guardian* : on the whole everybody is what I should call faintly hopeful.

¹ His sister was with the Foreign Office contingent at the Hôtel Majestic.

Arnold was very enthusiastic about my going to the East, and said there would be lots of openings in Syria and the new Kingdom of Arabia as well as Persia : he will probably be able to get me into touch with Colonel Lawrence, the remarkable archæologist, aged 29, who has piloted Feisul through the war, and talks Arabic better than most Arabs. . . .

To his father—

February 1.—A line to say that I am crossing on Wednesday and hope to get home that evening. It is at last all fixed up, and as I shall only be entitled to wear my uniform until the following Thursday, I am practically a civilian again.

Many thanks for your letter. I haven't at all definitely made up my mind what part of the world to go to, but I'm afraid I don't want ever to go near either the Home or Indian Civils, even with the allurements of a C.B. or a title to draw me on. I want a rough life, the rougher the better, and I think the newer a country is the more satisfactory it's likely to be in that respect. That's particularly why I was encouraged by Arnold's view of the possibilities of Arabia and Persia. But I've no intention of making up my mind without some facts to go on, and of course I shall not forget the medical question. All I know definitely at present is that the sooner I start doing something the better, and the rougher and more improvised it is the happier I shall be.

. . . I have another letter from Victor [Murray] asking me more than ever urgently to take on the Social Study side of the Student Movement, but I am absolutely unqualified, and I don't think it's selfish to say that it leads nowhere. . . .

He arrived at home, demobilized, on February 5. In an exchange of farewell letters with his Colonel, the latter wrote : ' I am sure you know how greatly I valued your good work, and I am prepared to bet that our little show knew more about the Bosch than any other C.B. officers (the eye-wash element, thank God, was non-existent), greatly due to your efforts and thoroughness.'



CHAPTER VIII

THE LAST TERMS AT OXFORD, FEBRUARY TO JULY 1919

SAUMAREZ had decided to go back to Oxford for the rest of the Lent and Summer Terms. His father had hoped that he would try for a first-class in Lit. Hum. and a Fellowship : but his age and his varied experiences in the war made him impatient of undergraduate life. Pending the choice of a career, he took daily lessons in Arabic from Mr. Dewhurst, the University lecturer, and made rapid progress, struggling with its many difficulties, and ' trying to learn the colloquial and the classical at once.' He also took political philosophy essays to Mr. Lindsay, Tutor of Balliol, and helped in the Parliamentary election contest of Professor Gilbert Murray against Professor Oman. He renewed his acquaintance with the former Headmaster of Dulwich College, Mr. A. H. Gilkes, who had become Vicar of St. Mary Magdalen, Oxford, and he presently threw himself with energy into the work of reorganizing the Balliol Boys' Club, whose members and helpers had been scattered or killed in the war.

On February 19 he writes to his mother :—' The College is very full, and mostly seems incredibly young, though pleasant. There are about a dozen people who were up in my time, none of whom I knew at all well : so that one feels like the newest of Freshers—with a difference. We have all meals in Hall. . . . My rooms are quite nice, and all my things had been carefully packed and arrived in good condition.'

At the end of term he started from home on his motor-cycle—known to the family as ' Jerry '—to spend Easter with Maurice Jacks and other Balliol friends at Oldbury-on-Severn. He describes an episode on the journey :

Oxford, April 13.— . . . About midday yesterday at Henley I found the clutch not working very satisfactorily : so I went into a garage and started to look at it. The

man there had never taken one down, so we messed about with it, and before I knew where I was we got it all to pieces and then found it was a whole day's job putting it together again. We gave it a thorough clean-up and put it into beautiful order, but it wasn't finished till 9.30 P.M., so I dined and slept at a very nice hotel and came on this morning. I am going straight on now, and hope to get to Oldbury by tea-time. It is a lovely day, and everything is going beautifully.

He came home from Oldbury on Easter Monday, April 21, on his motor-cycle, through Chippenham, Marlborough, Reading, Wokingham, and Croydon, and went up to Oxford on it for his final term on April 25. He at once went on with the revival of the Boys' Club. He writes to Mr. Hubert Secretan, an old Balliol man, and one of its chief promoters while in residence and subsequently, on May 5:

. . . The Old Boys' Club is started. I had a meeting on Friday—only fifteen turned up, but they unanimously decided on the two top rooms and elected a committee. We met yesterday and are getting furniture and framing rules. Then we're going to circularize all the old members. In addition I put to them the question of their helping with the present Club, and they were really keen, so we are going to institute this as one of the recognized activities of the Old Boys' Club. I have a roster there of people ready to do it. When this is started I propose asking some of them on to the Committee, but I foresee great difficulty with the time of meeting. The Club is going strong, and besides the three officials (Pres., V.P., and Sec.) we have five people taking nights, and have also restarted the Sunday service—seven boys yesterday. . . .

To the same—

May 8.—The old B.C. makes great progress and may open on Monday week. I propose sending out the 'prospectus' and rules to all those who have been receiving the 'Club at War.' . . .

We had an experimental general meeting to-night—I spoke and then Maurice—a few words about the meaning of the Club, Camp, and the revival of the Club, and

Maurice's departure. I really think it was quite a success. Cricket and rowing are going well : we are going to start running again : and camp money is slowly coming in.

Of the Club he writes from Mesopotamia later in the year (October 2) to Mr. Hubert Secretan :

The Camp photographs [of Radcot Camp] are most delightful ; and though they'll never quite represent what the Tyneham photos stand for, it will always be a great pleasure to look at them. I think I should never have taken on the Club last Term but for the memory of two people who 'never said die,' the Mouse [Arthur Innes Adam, p. 4] and Stephen Reiss [p. 6], and I always find myself looking at Club questions much more from the foregone conclusion that for their sakes (and all the others, of course) it had got to go on and develop, than from the more long-headed standpoint of [other workers]. Term will be starting in a day or two, and I'm wondering tremendously how the new generation will proceed—this is where the test comes and no mistake, not because [the present helpers are not] keen and capable, but because it can't ever be a sacred trust in the future to anybody, now we're gone. . . . I am going to write a hearty letter to the Club in a few days' time—next Term my memory will have faded from among them !

Of his Oxford life since his return there he wrote from Mesopotamia to Mr. Cyril Bailey, from Najaf, August 30, 1919 :

. . . I want to say how very much I appreciated your good-bye letter. My time at Oxford since I came back [in February] has been very much an affair of moods—sometimes I thought I couldn't stay and at others I was exceedingly happy : but, of course, it couldn't go on, and, though I hated leaving and would most gladly have had my full fourth year, it was out of the question. But I'm very glad indeed that I did come back for the time, and I owe more than I can say to the Boys' Club during that time.

Early in May, Saumarez had some prospect of joining the Commission just about to set out under the command of



'THE BALLIOL BOYS' CLUB IN CAMP AT RADCOT, JULY, 1920.



Lieutenant-Colonel Tallents, C.B., 'to restart the three Southern Baltic Republics' (Esthonia, Livonia, Lithuania). He might have gone as Camp Commandant, in charge of stores, servants, and accounts, with the hope of learning German and Russian and eventually taking part in the general work of the expedition. He writes to his father on May 7 :

I must say I am immensely attracted. It does sound like real reconstruction. . . . Even if it lasts only a short time it will be very good experience, and though I hate to think of not going East, it really seems too indefinite at present to get any ideas about what will be done.

Naturally I don't want to go down straight away, and I was immensely looking forward to a holiday with you and all sorts of things in the Long : but it does seem such a chance, and it would be such a happiness to be doing something. Write and say what you think.

But he had also heard of a 'job as Editor of an Arabic Fortnightly in Baghdad, which might be an ideal way of getting to know those parts.' He went to see Miss Gertrude Bell in London, and wrote to his father on May 19 :

I went, and found her account of the job very exciting. much more so, and with bigger possibilities, than Esthonia, It consists nominally in the supervision of five papers, to wit, four dailies in English, Arabic, Persian, and Turkish, mainly Reuter and not very serious, and a serious illustrated weekly, the contributors to which are mainly learned Baghdadis (largely religious leaders), chiefly archæological and literary, but of course to some extent political. The real work, however, consists not so much in this as in getting to know these same learned men (the *ashrâf*, which is plural of *sharif* and means *intelligentsia*) not only in Baghdad, but all over the country. One would go as a Civil Servant : the present military administration is being almost immediately transformed into a separate service not under India or Egypt, and—but this is private—we are going to have the mandate and aim at building up a real independent Arab state. There is nothing cut and dry about the service ; they want people

very much, and one would not necessarily be kept on the newspaper job permanently. The pay would probably be about 500 rupees a month, which is a little over £400 a year, and living is cheap in Baghdad.

I said I liked the idea, and Miss Bell has cabled for details: I shall probably have to decide this week. She thinks one ought to go as soon as possible, i.e. in a month or two, as I should have to live in Baghdad for some months talking Arabic before I should be much use.

I have written to Tallents. . . . He has been to Paris to talk [his plans] over: but of course I am not in any way bound to him. Miss Bell is very nice, and her account of the Mesopotamian administration is very hopeful.

On May 22 he wrote to his father that Colonel Tallents had offered him the post of Diplomatic Adviser to the Estonian Mission, but that he preferred Baghdad. The letter continued:

. . . I am rather hectically busy, as I have started a real Arabic author, and find him incredibly difficult; I have to look out practically every word in the dictionary, and the vocabulary is simply inexhaustible.

This evening just after Hall I was invited to go and dine with the Kiplings, so I dressed and went and ate a second dinner. He is a marvellous enthusiast, and a wonderful story-teller, and I have thoroughly enjoyed it. He was very much excited about Baghdad. . . .

To his mother—

June 12.—I received the enclosed from Miss Bell yesterday, so I went to town to-day, lunched with her, and saw Shuckburgh [Mr. E. S. Shuckburgh of the India Office]. They asked me if I could go at once, and said it really was urgent, and that Colonel Wilson is always asking them to hurry people up. And as I have to go by Bombay, the journey will take five or six weeks, so I thought I must accept. They say they will not be able to get me a passage probably before the end of the month, so that I may expect to sail in about four weeks; and they will give me one week's notice. I am to go in uniform, as travelling is much less pleasant for a civilian. . . . The journey will be unpleasant, but many people

have done it during the war and are none the worse : apparently I shall get into the monsoon, but on the other hand there will not be much more than one month of hot weather in Baghdad. I am to go, as you will see, for one year : so that if I don't like it, or am uncomfortable in the heat, I can come away at the end. If I do like it, I don't know when I shall get leave, as nothing of that sort is settled yet.

What would you like to do between now and the time of my sailing ? . . . It's sad to think that we shan't get our real holiday all together for some time, but these aren't much times for holidays, and it takes happy people to do justice to them. Write and tell me what you both think.

His father replied, not opposing the plan, but urging him to submit to an independent medical examination before leaving, and suggesting that in his case there might be special danger in going out in the hottest season.

To his mother—

June 15.—This is in answer to Papa's letter, but I am addressing it to you in case he has left before it arrives.

First, as regards medical examination, I have not forgotten, but waited to see whether the India Office wanted to do it themselves : and as they don't I am going to a friend of mine here who has been doctoring in Egypt and Palestine through the war and knows all about heat ailments, etc. It is of course a bad time to go, but so many people have done it during the war under infinitely greater discomforts that I did not think I could possibly stick out for a delay on this ground, and I have no doubt whatever in my own mind that, though I shall be excessively uncomfortable for a few weeks, I shall be none the worse, and that the novelty and excitement of travelling will carry me through.

As regards the job itself, that of course depends primarily on the peace with Turkey and the mandate, and secondly on A. T. Wilson, the Governor. Editing the *Baghdad Times per se* is quite unattractive to me, and apparently more or less a nominal task : my real function is to be in touch with educated Muslim opinion. I am only

going for a year, and if I think I can't make enough of it or that it won't develope, I shall come away. But I am conceited enough to think that my Arabic will be better than most, and that I shall be able to make a position there, and become an authority on the country. If I do come away I shall only have had a year of travelling, and I don't think I should find it difficult to get a choice of jobs in England—in fact I've to-day been offered the post of Principal of the Mansfield House Settlement in Canning Town.

Finally, it is of course a terribly long way ; but very soon, when the regular flying service between Egypt and Baghdad is going, it will be much nearer than India : and though there are many things for which one would be only too glad to stay in England, and especially because of you both, I don't feel that I could possibly settle down for some years yet.

As for the salary, it appears to be thought liberal, and living is said to be exceedingly cheap ; the concessions are travelling, billets, and rations : I shall live in a mess at the first. . . .

His mother joined him and her sister in Oxford, on June 19, was present at the Encænna and the concert of the Bach Choir, which performed the 'Sea Symphony,' and went for a long excursion with him in 'Jerry' on June 27 to Stow-on-the-Wold, Frilford, and Burford. She returned next day to Bromley, while he joined the Balliol Boys' Club Camp at Radcot Bridge on the Upper Thames. He writes thence :

To his mother—

Sunday, June 29.—A line to say that we're getting on very well on the whole. The entire consignment of blankets, palliasses, and ground sheets got lost on rail and didn't appear yesterday, so last night and to-day the boys are getting along with the twenty odd Club blankets and what they've brought with them. Some of them were rather cold last night, I think, but they took it very well, and seem to be remarkably happy. The food is going well, too. I am taking 'Jerry' in to Oxford to-morrow and hope then to find the blankets, or at least

to trace them. The weather isn't ideal, owing to the wind, but there have only been two or three drops of rain, and I fervently hope it may hold off.

I quite enjoyed the [Balliol] Gaudy on Friday. . . . We bathed before breakfast this morning, and it was jolly cold. We're only taking voluntary parties to church, as it's a good way up to Clanfield. Well, I must go and see about their tea.

To his father—

The Union, Monday, June 30.—On getting in here this morning to see about blankets, I found a note from the India Office awaiting me to say that I was to sail by s.s. *Nellore* leaving London 10th July. . . .

He left the Club camp next day, spent two days in Oxford, and came back to Bromley on Friday, July 4. The week-end was spent in Canterbury with his parents and his aunt, Miss Ranken (really his father's cousin, who had lived near the household since his infancy)—a crowded and amusing journey, services and Communion at the Cathedral, and a long walk in the afternoon.

The next few days were taken up in farewell visits, and preparations for the voyage. On Friday, July 11, Saumarez and his mother went to Oxford, picked up the motor-cycle, and rode to Bromsgrove to spend a night with the headmaster, his father's cousin and his godfather; next day they rode via Kidderminster, Much Wenlock, and Bridgnorth to Church Stretton, where his father joined them. On Sunday afternoon, in spite of his lame leg, Saumarez went up the steep side of Caer Caradoc, and on Monday rode back with his mother through Ludlow to Oxford, spent the night at his uncle's, and arrived at Bromley on July 15.

CHAPTER IX

BROMLEY TO BAGHDAD, JULY AND AUGUST 1919

SAUMAREZ's father saw him off at Victoria by the Boulogne boat-train on the morning of July 16. At Paris he was met at the station by his sister, and dined with her and a friend at the Hôtel Majestic—which looked 'much emptier and less distinguished than formerly.' Then they went on the roof and looked at the lights of the city; it was a most lovely evening. Next day was spent at Fontainebleau, 'the weather perfect.' On July 18 they went to Versailles, walked to St. Cloud, and parted after dining at the Gare de Lyon. He went on board the *Nellore* on arrival at Marseilles, and utilised the day by going by train along the Corniche road to Cannebières, 'where (he wrote to his father on July 19) I had a most excellent bathe. The water was cold and most beautifully clear . . . there is a most wonderful view and rocky hills behind, and the sea was as blue as in Guernsey.' He adds: 'Mamma's letter has just come, and please thank her for it very much indeed. You have both been so very, very kind and generous about my going that I don't know how to say thank you. I am divided at present between hoping that it will be a success and hoping that it won't, so that I may be able to return for good after my year: but meanwhile I am very much looking forward to the experience. I only wish you could both come with me, and then it would be ideal.'

The *Nellore* sailed on Sunday morning, July 20, and he writes to his mother on approaching Malta: 'The colour and effect of the sea outside remind me so much of bits of the "Sea Symphony," and I wish I could sing in it all over again.'

The voyage had no unusual features: Saumarez wrote on arrival that 'there is more of the sea in the "Sea Symphony" than in many thousand miles of luxurious

travel in the P. & O.' There were sports and deck games, in which he 'took an insignificant and inglorious part,' a dinner in fancy dress, at which he appeared as an Arab : and he reported that his appetite 'grows rather than diminishes' with the heat of the Red Sea. The ship was so light that the monsoon made her roll very heavily, though 'much the worst thing was having the portholes closed up.' He found three acquaintances aboard—an old Alleynian, an ex-cadet at Cambridge, who found him looking much younger, and a Bromley neighbour, and also 'a much travelled lady,' who knew his cousin, Lady de Sausmarez, then resident at Shanghai.

He wrote to his father from near Port Said, July 25 :

I had a very pleasant afternoon ashore [at Malta], and saw most of Valetta, also managed a most delicious bathe in the harbour. It is a place full of lovely views over the various long inlets and arms of the sea which make it such a wonderful harbour, and all the buildings are very well in keeping, so that the general effect is that of an Italian picture : and I should imagine that it is very like a Sicilian town. I saw the Cathedral of the Knights of St. John, a bit too ornate for my taste, but well worth seeing. I should have liked to see a bit of the island as well : it is all terraced and marvellously well cultivated ; but there was no opportunity. Valetta was full of goats, driven in for the milking, and they are a very jolly sight. The only drawback is the touting of the inhabitants, which is really intolerably persistent.

To his mother—

S.S. 'Nellore,' Red Sea, July 30.— . . . It was very interesting seeing the canal, though, unfortunately, we did most of the journey at night. I had an excellent look at El Kantara, where the battle was fought : it is now an enormous military camp, stretching for miles into the desert. The canal is bridged there by the Palestine railway. We had wonderful views of the mountains along the Sinai Coast and on the African side in the Gulf of Suez : very bare and grim, utterly uninhabited and without vegetation, deeply scored with fissures and extraordinarily fantastic altogether, standing straight out of the sea like a

stage background. Until to-day, there has been burning sun and the bluest of seas, but now it is overcast and leaden, which makes the heat much worse, of course. We had a look at Port Said and bathed very satisfactorily, though the water was too warm to be really refreshing. There is nothing in the place to detain one, though it is, of course, the real gateway of the East, and in that way romantic. I understood a word here and there in the Arabic gibbered by the deck hands, and could read many of the notices, generally aided by the English translation: but it's a poor sort of Arabic, and I hope to do better in Baghdad.

To his father—

[*Approaching Bombay*], *August 6*.—I went ashore for an hour or so at Aden. It is a curious place: very precipitous slag hills cut at the top into fantastic shapes, with the houses stuck about at the foot in a vague sort of way and looking most unkempt. There are, however, many touches of colour, particularly in the Arab dresses: lots of camels, goats, water-carriers, beggars, and other paraphernalia of the Arabian Nights. One sees very few Arabs there, however: mostly the population is black boys from the Somali coast. . . .

In the hotel at Bombay he unexpectedly met his old schoolfellow and friend Captain Eric Beney, 3rd Brahmins, I.A., who had been serving in the army in India during the war and was sailing next day for England.

To his mother—

Taj Mahal Hotel, Bombay, August 8.— . . . This city is not altogether a successful compromise between East and West, the latter very much predominating: but it's a fine city, and our drive over Malabar Hill was well worth doing and gave us a magnificent view. The Eastern element is supplied by the clothes, especially the passing sombre Parsis, the bullock carts carrying endless bales of wool to the docks, and the foliage of palms and such; the gardens are bright too with various forms of cannas, and very beautiful they are. . . . It's four weeks to-night since we stayed at Bromsgrove on

our first night of that memorable tour ! It seems a long time.

Looking back on his stay at Bombay, from Mesopotamia, he writes to Mr. Cyril Bailey :

Najaf, August 30.—Bombay I loathed : it rained and was muddy and sticky, and it's as horrible as the worst type of Babu in its assimilation of East and West. I thank Heaven that I'm not at the University there professing economics.

He left for Basrah on August 9, in a hospital ship, with a few other passengers.

To his mother—

S.S. 'Vasna,' Persian Gulf (approaching Bushire), August 14.— . . . We are steaming along the Persian coast, about five miles out, I suppose, and shall reach Bushire in about two hours. It is a most glorious day, and not too hot ; yesterday and the day before were intolerable, much worse than the Red Sea, and the nights brought no relief, but to-day there is a beautiful northerly breeze causing a gentle swell, and the white horses are sparkling on a very clear blue-green sea. The colour is not equal to the Mediterranean, but it is very rich, and an astonishing contrast to the Gulf of Oman, which is muddy, and the Indian Ocean, which was grey under the monsoon. The coast line is similar to that in the Gulf of Suez, bare rocky cliffs standing straight out of the sea and forming a fantastic outline of towers and spires and chimneys against the sky : no sign of habitation or green of any kind, and utterly waterless.

We had two very rough days through the monsoon, coming more or less against it, and this ship, which is considerably smaller than the *Nellore*, though much lower in the water, developed a remarkable corkscrew motion which completely did for me. . . . To-day the heat is very much drier, and will be more so at Basrah. Yesterday's heat was just like a bathroom full of steam, and one simply couldn't get dry. . . . The cliffs have fallen away now, and the coast is flat and hardly visible in the glare. We must be near Bushire.

To his father—

Basrah, August 16.—Here I am in Mesopotamia at last. . . . We arrived off the hospital pier here about 2 P.M. yesterday, but did not disembark until after 6, owing nominally to the heat, but really, I suspect, to the Embarkation Staff's siesta. The temperature yesterday afternoon was 101°, which is cool for the place, and we have just missed a heat wave, for the shade temperature last Sunday was 125°. So far we haven't felt the heat at all, as the dryness is so delightful after the Gulf, and we had the most deliciously cool night last night—the first in which one has needed a blanket since the Mediterranean.

. . . I can't describe Basrah much yet; but it is much greener than I had expected. The British port, which is enormous, is really a suburb called Ashar, and there appear to be quite good shops. There are many streams cutting up from the main river here, and the whole place is covered very thickly with date palms, the dates being now nearly ripe; and underneath there is a good deal of green scrub and some grass. Coming up the Shatt-el-Arab from Abadan the banks are very pretty with Arab booths and wooden and mud huts all along, and quite a lot of sheep and cattle beneath the date palms, numberless picturesque boats on the river and occasionally a large brick house, with the deep verandahs and pillared gateway which give an imposing and rather Roman appearance. Of course the palms only go back a few hundred yards from the river, and behind them is the desert, but so thick is the green that you scarcely catch a glimpse of it. [He adds that the flies and mosquitoes, it was said, had been killed off by the great heat of the previous week.]

. . . I am very glad the voyage is over: first-class travelling by sea is incredibly dull, and doesn't contain one-tenth of the exultation that there was in crossing Barton Broad before the wind in the *Spray's* dinghy this time last year. I was interested by Malta and Aden, and I hope never to see Port Said or Bombay again.

They left Basrah at noon on the 19th, after various detentions due to official mismanagement, which also

left them without supplies on the boat except the groceries and tinned food they had brought with them and what they could buy en route—‘no bread or jam at all, no biscuits, and no vegetables.’ The nights were delightful, and at midnight quite cold, the days too hot to do anything, with a burning breeze in the afternoon.

To his father—

August 20.—But for the heat, this trip would be most fascinating, and even as it is there are constant interests cropping up by the way, and many scenes of real beauty. . . . [The boat] is an ancient sternwheeler with a maximum speed of perhaps four knots, and she travels, as they all do, with an enormous barge lashed at each side, so that she is highly unwieldy. During the last twenty-four hours we have been running through the Narrows, which extend most of the way from Kurna to Amarah; they are incredibly tortuous, so that yesterday, in spite of the flatness of the country, we were all day in sight of a single grove of trees, which we passed before 9 A.M. Also we stick each half-hour or so, and hit the bank fairly often, but we always get off again very quickly. One of the barges runs aground, and then the whole caboodle swings bodily round and scrapes off. In the Narrows our speed can hardly be two miles an hour.

. . . The banks on each side yesterday and to-day have been almost uniformly grim and treeless: but one comes occasionally to clumps of trees, and Amarah, which we are now approaching, is almost hidden in trees. The country looks very rich, though the only crops one sees are maize and melons, but the number of Arab villages one passes is surprising—about two per mile, I should think. ‘Villages’ is rather a courtesy title, for they are merely collections of palm-leaf booths, shaped like half a barrel and about twelve feet deep, huddled close together in numbers from three to thirty. One sees lots of sheep—brown, black and white—lots of cattle, very like English breeds and as different as possible from the Indian type, plenty of fowls, and very few horses and dogs, and the people look rather attractive. The women are unveiled and wear picturesque colours, though rather ragged and dirty: often the nose-ring is all that distinguishes them

from the men, who wear flowing robes of dirty white and a turban rather like a red and white (or black and white) dishcloth. Crowds of children run beside us on the bank or even swim out to us with eggs and even fowls : the girls always dressed in reddish flowing robes and the boys absolutely stark naked. Even in the midday heat they caper and play together in the sun, while we sit and gasp. How far the grazing extends from the bank one can't tell, but probably two or three miles : certainly the cattle look flourishing, and though the people are far from rich all the women wear ornaments, many of gold. They get about mainly in boats called *bālāms*, funny antique craft like an elongated Canadian canoe, and with the most antiquated of sails.

. . . We are close to Amarah now, and are going off to do our shopping—it will be nice to taste bread again. But we had an excellent omelette for breakfast and chicken last night for dinner, so we might have fared very much worse !

To his mother—

Tigris, nearing Kut, August 24.— . . . After Amarah the river gets much wider and the banks higher, so that at present we can't see over them at all. The river is low, and for the last three nights we have tied up by the bank from 7.30 P.M. till 5 A.M. owing to the difficulties of navigation ; by this we lose the breeze and attract the flies, so it's not very pleasant : and last night beside a high bank was the most airless since the Persian Gulf. Yesterday, in addition, we were detained six hours and more a little below Sheikh Said (where the Kut relief force stuck) by the grounding of a boat just in front of us in the channel : so we sat and broiled all day until eventually a new channel was discovered, and very gingerly, with many bumpings upon the river bed and hair-breadth escapes from a similar fate ourselves, we managed to thread it.

Two days ago we came in sight of the mountains on the Persian frontier very far away, perhaps eighty miles, and looking very grim and barren. Apart from this shadow on the horizon, the country is the same endless plain : but now there are no palm trees. Occasionally one passes a grove of mulberry trees, and sometimes also

willows, but this is rare, and mostly one sees nothing but endless miles of dusty green with innumerable flocks, queerly distorted by the mirage (so that one sees oxen obviously standing on their own backs), and through the glasses they are wonderfully clear eight or ten miles off. The bee-hived shaped booths of matting have now given place to the black and brown camel hair tents of the Bedawi, which cluster thick along the banks even down to the water's edge. The amount of stock and population is surprising : rather handsome wild people with gay colours and ornaments, and very fine fat cattle. At sunrise and sunset I find it extraordinarily beautiful, though my companions all curse it unceasingly and wonder why they came. . . .

At Basrah we picked up a funny little Persian boy from Khanikin (which is not far over the border from Baghdad) as a sort of servant. He had been employed as knife and boot-boy by an Indian army officer who took him to India on leave, and while there was suddenly ordered off to Afghanistan; so he put Bāchal on a boat, and having labelled his luggage (a small tin box), Bearer Backchat, sent him off by ship from Karachi to Basrah. There he was produced to see if we would take him up to Baghdad, and we agreed. He has no idea of his age, but looks about ten—he may be fourteen or fifteen however : he is quite useless as a servant, being too small, but a nice intelligent child, who talks Arabic, Persian, and Hindustani with equal ease. I have talked a little Arabic to him, but his accent is difficult to me, and he doesn't always understand my book-language; however, we make one another understand fairly easily. I also tried Persian : it worked all right, but I had no conversational words in that tongue, and can't get at my grammar. . . .

From Kut they went on by rail to Baghdad, a night journey. He announced his arrival by a telegram to his mother wishing her many happy returns of her birthday.

CHAPTER X

LIFE AS A HAKIM, AUGUST 1919 TO JULY 1920

HE arrived at Baghdad on the morning of August 25, but not to stay. He writes thence on August 26 :

To Lady Mary Murray—

Colonel Wilson wants me to do an Assistant Political Officer's job for a time, partly because he's exceedingly short-handed and partly because it's good experience of the administration, and I am going off to Najaf (where I am succeeding—*longo intervallo*—Lionel Smith¹) this evening. Najaf is out in the desert west of the Euphrates, and about 120 miles south from here : it is no great distance from Babylon (which I hope to see to-morrow), and is the most famous of Shi'ah shrines as being the tomb of Ali : consequently it contains one of the most bigoted and stiff-necked populations of all the cities of Irāq. Wilson thinks I may be there about three months, but wants to get me back here as soon as he can. I am very glad indeed to be starting in this way : I want to get a knowledge of Political work, and I shall also have much more freedom in my study of colloquial Arabic there.

As I expected, the job for which I'm intended is not in any sense an editorship, but rather running a publicity department. . . . At present vernacular papers are being run in five cities of Irāq, and the idea is that I would write up subjects, have my own translators, and then distribute to the five editors. This would involve seeing all the papers that come into the Civil Commissioner's office, and knowing all that's going on in the country ; so by the end of my year I ought to know pretty well whether I want to stay. The conditions are exceedingly generous, and I must say that so far I like Wilson immensely. The moment one sees him one understands all that his detractors feel about him :

¹ Son of the Master of Balliol ; Education Department, Mesopotamia ; sometime Fellow and Tutor of Magdalen College, Oxford.

but he's the sort of man whose work can only be judged in practice. He's very strong, and with a truly Homeric joy in his strength, full of energy, working day and night, absolutely contemptuous of luxuries and with a profound knowledge of the country. He's intensely practical, and can't stand the application of theories by people in circumstances of which they've no personal knowledge: consequently he has no use for his namesake the President. But I spent a lot of yesterday reading some of his files, dealing with expressions of opinion from an area bounded by Constantinople, Teheran, Bandar Abbas, and Mecca, and with about twenty Christian sects, the two main Muhammadan parties with countless sub-groups, Jews, devil-worshippers of Sinjar, and nameless secret societies for the warp, and for the woof Kurds, Turks, Circassians, Syrians, Arabs, Bedouin, Indians of all sorts, and again Jews—what can come out of it all?

Well, we shall see, at least I hope we shall, for I think I want to stay here. More particularly I want to get to Kurdistan among the hills of the northern district; I want to dig, and to learn these languages and some history. . . .

Writing the same day to his father, after describing his prospective work similarly, he adds:

All that Euphrates country is very rich in ruins and remains, and I have been looking this morning at some beautiful silver coins with $\Delta\text{HMH}\text{THP}$ $\Sigma\text{O}\text{THP}$ upon them picked up a little lower down, which I imagine came with Alexander the Great.

I haven't thoroughly explored Baghdad yet by any means, but I went shopping this morning and saw a good deal of it. It is surprisingly small, and, owing to lack of stone and the badness of the brick, the buildings are on the whole low and unimposing, though one gets very jolly effects with built-out upper stories of carved wood. The old narrow streets with houses almost touching above one are exceedingly attractive, as is the extraordinary mixture that swarms along them. But the Turks drove a big road straight through the town, and destroyed all the fortifications some years ago, and this, though a great advantage, seems to have taken away much of what was the peculiar

charm of Baghdad, when no carts could enter it ; but I expect that really the romance attaching to the name is due mostly to the Arabian Nights. There's nothing left of Harun's city, which was upon the opposite side of the river from the present one. The river is very fine here, about 400 yards wide and crossed by a bridge of boats. The city is surrounded by palm trees, and but for the dust is now very clean.

To his mother—

Najaf, Friday, August 29.—A car took me and my kit from the mess at 10.15 P.M. on Tuesday 26th to Baghdad South station, about three miles away. There I got out my bedding and went to sleep fairly easily in the train (which didn't leave till 1 A.M.), and arrived at Hillah after a comfortable night about 5.30 A.M. I had a good view of the mounds of Babylon in the sunrise, but it's some little way from the line. At Hillah there was no car to meet me and I scented evil ; but the morning was still cool, so I took my little bag and walked up, arriving soon after 7. At the Political Office I found that the telegram about me from Baghdad hadn't arrived, and they had no car or launch to send me on in. However, there was a train going to Kifl at 7.30 A.M., which they stopped for me. So I shaved, washed, had an excellent breakfast, and was sent off to the station in a car soon after 8.

I found the train to be narrow gauge, and all open trucks except for the guard's van, which was open at the back like an observation car, and thus comfortable ; so I got into this. Presently the guard came along, a horrible looking old broken down British Tommy, who, to my great disgust, I found to be very drunk. I was of course the only passenger, so, as his van was the only cool spot, there was nothing for it. He started by telling me that he came out here in 1916, and it is a fact that before I left him he was telling me that he'd been in this country forty years.

The journey took $2\frac{1}{2}$ hours, being about 20 miles, and the solitary joy was a good view of the Tower of Babel, a round tower standing on a bigish hill, which I hope to examine some day. At Kifl, which is Ezekiel's tomb and a great place of pilgrimage for the Jews, I found that a boat for Kufa might be expected about 1 P.M.:

so I wired to Najaf asking for a car to fetch me at Kufa, and sat down to wait in the guard's van, where, to my immense relief, the terrible old man went off to sleep. About 1.30 the craft made its appearance, three native boats fitted with petrol engines lashed together, as two had broken down. By the time they were unloaded and loaded up again it was after four o'clock, but I managed to get plenty of dates and some ginger beer to drink, so it wasn't so bad, and the heat on the Euphrates is far less than on the Tigris. Eventually we got away, but the only engine going was in the outside boat, and the strain immediately broke the tows, and we all drifted helpless to the bank again. Then there was a most maddening dispute between the Arabs and Indians about what to do, and it looked as if we should never get off, so I got very angry and took command: and, through an Indian doctor who could talk Arabic, cursed them all, and eventually got away about 5. Another engine was got going, but kept breaking down. By this time I was getting horribly thirsty and felt extremely ill-tempered; but this part of the Euphrates is so lovely (really as green and picturesque in some ways as the Thames, with gorgeous gardens on either side, and lots of boats and population) that as the sun got lower and the evening more lovely, I became quite happy again.

We kept on hitting the bottom, but didn't stick, until about 6.30 P.M. suddenly Kufa appeared, a picturesque little town overhanging the river, and I thought all was well. Just as the sun had disappeared we were turning slightly to run alongside, when the whole caboodle went hard aground and stuck there in mid-stream, with the whole town looking on from the wall. Ropes were thrown, and the crew got into the water and strained at each boat separately, and at last we got off, and got ashore just as darkness was falling. I found my car had been sent back here; so, as it was now dark, I threw myself upon the mercy of the Inland Water Transport Corporal; and he produced a large hall to sleep in, some tea, and an excellent meal of two roast pigeons and some fruit that I had with me. I was thoroughly enjoying this when in came two figures, in European clothes with fez, who proved to be the municipal governor of the town, a local Armenian

called Sergis, and his cousin, an ex-Turkish officer, of Baghdad, who was very friendly and useful to us: his English is wonderful and he was educated at Stonyhurst. Sergis had come to offer me his house for the night: he's a nice old man with a little French, and received me most royally. So I moved into his house, which he was not occupying, and a bed was made for me on the roof. I then found that an Egyptian called Ghāwī who works here in the office, and comes from the Egyptian Civil, lived about three houses away, with his wife, and I was taken there to have some more dinner, which I did. He's a most charming little man and has done excellent work here.

So my day closed in great comfort, and in the morning cars appeared and I came up here for breakfast: it is six miles over the real desert and a wonderful place, but more of that in another letter.

I am being sent off in three or four days to take over a sub-district in this area. It is at present being run temporarily by a Syrian called Mustafa, who is said to be both efficient and pleasant; but he is going on leave, the district is big and important, and the sheikhs very much want an Englishman. When Mustafa goes in three weeks or so, I shall be entirely alone, so I shall be able to get right down to the Arabic pretty quickly. . . .

The district, Eastern Shāmīyah, 'about the size of Oxfordshire,' is further described in later letters. It extended from just below Kifl to just above Shinafiyah, some forty miles along a stream believed by some to be the ancient Gihon, one of the three great channels of the Euphrates. The cultivated area extended six or seven miles from the river; but westward the district stretched indefinitely into the desert. It contained the richest of the cultivated land in Irāq, and was well irrigated, and surprisingly beautiful. 'Many of the side channels and backwaters arched in with willows backed by the most resplendent of skies are in their way as lovely as anything on the Thames or Cherwell, though of course the backing of hills is always to seek.' It was cut up in all directions by these side channels, and there being no cartways or roads, travel was on horseback or, very largely, by boat—





UMM AL BA'RUR : FERRY AND RIVER FRONT.



GHAMMAS FERRY, WITH BOATLOAD OF REEDS.
(The reeds were for filling up the holes at Ghammas.)

normally a Government steam launch. The main crop was rice, which had to be measured and taxed in October. The population was supposed to be about 35,000, all tribal except for two towns, i.e. markets, Umm al Ba'rur and Ghammas, of about 1500 or 2000 inhabitants each. It contained 'at least two buried cities, which were old before Abraham left Ur of the Chaldees,' but now are 'only mounds of sand with scattered bits of brick and pottery': and 'their names were lost before Harun al Raschid dealt hardly with the Barmecides.' 'Najaf, the Holy of Holies of the Shi'ah, lies twenty miles away: the prophet Ezekiel was buried at Kifl, my railway terminus, thirty-three miles away. I live therefore in a very aristocratic neighbourhood.' 'As the name Irāq is not well known in England, I think of heading my letters Babylonia.' 'No English troops ever came down my river, and I doubt if there are twenty Englishmen in the world who know Umm al Ba'rur personally.' 'In Turkish times the district was as turbulent as it was rich, and the amount of revenue obtained from it was ludicrous. Consequently, to the landowners, settled Government has its disadvantages; and to some of the desert sheikhs the idea of law and order for any unit larger than their own tribe is quite unintelligible. Further the Turks, to save their own weaknesses and avoid the use of troops, used to play off tribe against tribe, with results that will not be forgotten for many years. All this produces a very humorous atmosphere, and the Arab is a great humorist (his best point). On the whole too, the advantages of a settled life in this rich country are too obvious to be neglected: and the desert tribes will probably come to heel.'

To resume his letter of August 29 to his mother:

The work is partly collecting revenue and general supervision of land and crops, and partly judicial, in the sense that I am a magistrate, with powers of up to six months' imprisonment.¹ It lies almost entirely among tribal populations, and I met the principal sheikh of the largest tribe, the Khazail, yesterday and again to-day. He is a wonderful old man, who in Turkish times ruled all

¹ Subsequently his powers extended to giving two years' imprisonment.

this part of Irāq and was a terror to the Turk, who got no taxes from him at all : he's done a fair amount of plotting against us too, but at present is thought to be rather fond of us. He's over 70, but his beard and whiskers are dyed, and he looks about 50 ; a very strong, kindly face, most piercing eyes, a jolly smile, and charming manners. He is frightfully pleased at getting an Englishman in the district, and takes it as a personal compliment, and wouldn't remove his eyes from me all the time. I can hardly understand a word at present, but I don't think it will take long to alter that, and of course I shall have an interpreter.

This place [Najaf] is the headquarters of the whole district, which contains the three sub-districts of which I have one : and the staff is a Major here in charge of the whole show, a Captain who is his assistant and looks after the Najaf sub-district, a doctor who is civil surgeon, and the Egyptian Ghāwī, who looks after the town of Najaf and other matters of all sorts. Then there's one other sub-district officer at Abu Sukhair (where I am going this evening with the Major) and finally me : then of course there is an office staff, etc., partly British, partly Indian, and partly Egyptian. It's all very wonderful, and I've read a lot of files and reports which are an impressive testimony to British political organisation. . . .

My title, by the way, is Hākīm : and I am to wear uniform with white tabs, which are the political badge.

To Major Cumberbatch, August 31, he writes his first impression of Najaf :

Entirely surrounded by high walls, it stands in the desert six miles west of the river at Kufa. The land slopes up steadily all the way and then suddenly breaks off, leaving a sort of shelf overlooking the bare Syrian desert : the city lies on the edge of this shelf. Not in itself a large place, it is always swarming with pilgrims ; and all day come parties bringing their dead on donkeys to be buried in this sacred soil ; and all day the servants of H.B.M.G. stand and take the death duties (at four rupees a head) and the necessary sanitary measures. In the centre of the city stands one of the greatest and most famous mosques of the world : the dome and double minarets are roofed with plates of beaten gold, and no one knows what

is the value of the treasure chambers. The population is under 30,000 and the inflow of pilgrims for the next few months is estimated at 800,000 or even a million: no wonder there are riches here. It is the seat of the Mujtahids who are the Shi'ah Vatican: and it is said that the more powerful of them could excommunicate the Shah of Persia himself, while it is a solid fact that much of the Government of Persia is conducted from here.

Besides all this traffic of pilgrims and corpses, the city represents the trade link between the river systems and all that lies Eastward thereof and the plains of central Arabia; and there are caravans for Hāil and the Hejaz, and even, I believe, for Damascus. It goes without saying that such a city is unbelievably corrupt, obscene, treacherous, and inflammable; but at night—you know the night of the desert—as we sit on our roof after dinner and look at the illuminated outlines of the mosque (they've an income running into tens of thousands of pounds for this service alone) and hear the frenzied repetition of the pilgrims' prayers as they toil up the last mile of their weary journey half intoxicated with the passion of their fanaticism, and hear the bells on the donkeys and the deep echo of the city itself (which never ceases) and the owls and the dogs and the jackals—then indeed I pray never to lose my sense of the drama, and some day to know it well enough to live it and write it.

To his mother—

Umm al Ba'rur, September 4.—As it's your birthday I must just write a first note from my new house to wish you very many happy returns. How I wish you were spending the day with me, and how I should love it: and so would you, if you could only get here with rather less discomfort than at present seems inevitable; at least I could make you very comfortable in this pretty place, and the weather is delicious.

I came out here from Najaf yesterday; it took six hours in a launch through delightful scenery, and we only stuck once at all badly, though we fairly often hit the bottom. I landed here about 4.30, and saw round the place last night with Mustafa.

My own house is going to be quite nice, but when I

arrived, absolutely the only furniture was a table and chair, so it's not as yet very habitable. It's built in the ordinary way round a small courtyard, in which grows a large palm tree; there's plenty of roof space to sleep and sit upon; two rooms upstairs and four or five below. I shall soon make it comfortable. . . .

To his father—

September 6.—Now you'll want to hear about me in my capacity as Hākim of Umm al Ba'rur. . . . You might be amused to know how I spent Mamma's birthday. Mustafa and I started off in the launch at 9.30 A.M. and went upstream about fifteen miles to a place called Agar. Here we took the tribal sheikh, Hajji Juwān, on board, and went to look at crops. On the way back we picked up the son of the next sheikh, Abādiah, and all went to a meal with Hajji Juwān. This took place in the madhīf or guest house of Agar, and was great fun. The madhīf is a long arched building of reeds open at both ends ['like a Nissen hut,' he says elsewhere]: at the top are spread fine gay carpets, and on these two divans made with mattresses and pillows, one each side for Mustafa and me, so that we faced each other. Then Hajji Juwān sat lower down on my left, and down at the bottom in the middle were the cooking, and fifteen or so sons, relatives, local men, and servants, sitting smoking, and very silent. We started with three cups of tea (without milk—very good) and two of coffee. Then we waited till about three o'clock, when the food appeared: it was brought in in bowls, and there were three sets, one for Mustafa, one for me, and one for all the others. There were eight bowls of food in my lot, mainly rice (coloured yellow and with sultanas scattered over it—very good), two kinds of meat, three plates of sweet, a kind of sugar paste, rather heavy, gravy, and a bowl of sherbet, which is very much like sweet lime juice. I had of course to eat with my fingers, tearing the meat with both hands and conveying it and the rice to my mouth with the right only: this is not easy to do gracefully. But the food was well cooked, and I enjoyed it. The bread is flat cakes, looking very like our buckwheat cakes, but thinner and crisp—very nice indeed.

Then we had coffee, and so departed with the son of Abādiāh. Hajji himself did not eat till we had finished, and then he and about ten others started in; they eat quickly and with no talking, so he soon finished, and then the next lot came, and so on till all had eaten.

We had tea and coffee with the son of Abādiāh, looked at the crops in his village called Mohānnawīyah, and got back here about 8 P.M. in the moonlight, just as the muezzin was chanting the call to prayer from the mosque opposite my house.

While inspecting the rice crops the village people brought us bowls of 'leban,' the great drink of the desert. It is a kind of sour buttermilk. I thought I should hate it, but found it quite harmless, and very cool and refreshing.

Yesterday we stayed in, and I saw a little of the office work, but Friday is a holiday in this country, and there was not much work going on. It's awfully complicated, as all the accounts are kept in Arabic: and, as the revenue of my district alone for this year may reach ten lakhs, it's no small matter. However, I suppose I shall learn. . . .

To-day is the first day of one of the two great 'id or feasts of the Muhammadan year. Consequently there is some ceremony about it, and we had to receive the notables of the town. I dressed up in all my uniform—ordinarily I only wear shorts and a shirt—and we went to the office about seven A.M. Then they filed in, leading off with the Khatib or mosque official, and all came up and shook my hand, the more obsequious ones also kissing it, then sat down in silence round the room for two or three minutes, when cigarettes, Turkish delight, and sweets were handed round and Mustafa talked about the weather, when they filed out to make room for the next lot. Beyond saying 'ayyamkum sa 'idāh' (good morning) to each of them, I only ventured one remark in Arabic, so it was rather stiff; but the whole thing was over in half an hour, and now all the native officials are having four days' holiday. . . .

To Miss D. B. Wilson—

September 9.— . . . It's an awfully humorous position to be in really, and the pity is that there's no one to share the jokes with. In my own district I am treated exactly

like Royalty ; everyone stands up when I come by, the guard presents arms, and there is a general hurroosh : when I go visiting the sheikhs some of them kiss my hand, and their natural method of speech is to call down all sorts of blessings on me, although really I expect they detest having to do so : and this evening, as I was trying to talk to one in the street, a woman dashed up, fell at my feet and kissed them, and implored me to release her son from prison. In addition I am of course waited on hand and foot. I hate all this part of the business, for I never had much use for servants, and like to do things myself ; but what I do enjoy is the sheikhs' hospitality. . . .

To his mother—

September 13.—On Sunday I went with Mustafa down in the launch to the headquarters of my second Sha'bah or sub-district called Ghammas. We spent the night with the son of the main landowner, who was away on pilgrimage, and were royally entertained. A most wonderful decorated marquee, just like a stage property, was erected for us and lined with carpets, and we had excellent meals. The only drawback is that Ghammas, being very low, is full of flies, and I got my legs very badly bitten. . . . In the morning we looked at some crops and flood works, and got back about 8 P.M.

On Wednesday we rode out about 9.30 A.M., to see a sheikh called Hajji Humūd, who lives about five miles away. He gave us each a bowl of figs—such beauties—and also some excellent water-melon, and we got back soon after ten. . . .

To Lady Mary Murray—

September 14.—My three sub-districts are staffed mainly by Turkish officials, purely Arabic-speaking of course, and need more watching than one can possibly give them. My own office staff is also entirely Arabic-speaking, except for a funny coloured Jew from Bombay, whose English is very good, while his Arabic is worse than mine (he does the typing and office files, etc.), and a sort of personal assistant called a D.A.P.O., a Cairene with good English and French named Daud, who is my sheet anchor. My own Arabic is highly inadequate, and the local dialect is in

almost every respect different from what one learns ; so that much of what I say, even when correct, is unintelligible, and I cannot read one word of their handwriting yet. All this makes it very difficult to get hold of things quickly and satisfactorily, as so much goes on of which one can only get a very fleeting account unless one is to take all day going into it ; but it ought to make me learn Arabic quickly. [After describing his work and his entertainment by the sheikhs, he goes on :] Such is the life of the Hākīm. It's a sad thing that it needs two to enjoy the funny side of anything . . . except for very happily constituted people ; and I could have wept the other day when a wonderful old man like Sinbad came and with magnificent gestures and a roaring voice explained that he'd married his first cousin and paid £T13 for her, and now his uncle would give him neither her nor the money, and what was hadhrat al hākīm going to do about it ; or when a rich and learned landowner showed me a great round weal behind each temple looking as though he'd had a large bullet straight through behind his eyes, and assured me that he'd been branded there for eye trouble : it had done him very much good ! But indeed the humour of the whole business is incredible ; and I feel in my bones that I am a very odd successor to the late Turkish Kaimakam of this town. I wish I could write.

On arrival he was ill for a week from the effects of the climate and journey, and he was doctored with Arab medicine by his coffee-man. He writes to his father, September 20 :

I took it experimentally ; it is apparently lemon of some sort : it can't make me sicker than I am at present, and may improve matters. My cook was very much disturbed that his cookery was so little appreciated at first : when I explained that I was feeling sick he fairly burst with sympathy, and said I was his father and the father of them all (he's about fifty), and hoped, with loud Insha'allahs, that I should be well in the morning. . . .

In time I shall get the house comfortable, but at present it is full of sparrows, pigeons and bats, with an occasional scorpion. . . . The cook has just had a great bat hunt and brought down four—horrible things which make me

shudder with their twittering. I think my Arabic is really coming on, and I make myself understood without much difficulty, but it is very hard to follow the peasant people. . . .

However, five days later (September 25), he writes to his mother that he had done all his office work for two days without a translator, and was getting quite good at the handwriting, though it was new to him, being in the Turkish style. 'The only clear thing in the local style is the dots, and, as they are often misplaced or even omitted, it becomes impossible to read the stuff unless you know the words—you can never take a word letter by letter.' He goes on :

You would have been amused to see me last Sunday about tea-time holding a meeting of sheikhs (the weekly holiday here is of course on Friday). It was a sort of personal introduction to the district, and I suppose about seventy or eighty, great and small, were present. First there was sherbet, then coffee: then I made a speech in Arabic: then a pause: then Daud spoke (in reply, more or less, for them, for none of them could be put above another sufficiently to speak for all !) and then they came up and were introduced on departing. I enclose my speech in Arabic and English as an amusing archive: I didn't pronounce it very well; I don't think they followed much, but I believe it all makes sense and is grammatical, though the form is much more English than Semitic. They all stood up when I got up to speak, local etiquette being such that it would be impossible for them to remain seated while the Hākim is standing. They are a marvellous mixture of culture and savagery, these old gentlemen, and as they all sat round they formed a pretty picture of crime, intrigue, vice, and cruelty. On my left Syed Mohsin Abu Tabikh, the richest man in the district, worth no one knows what, but probably £100,000 at least; he asked a loan of 10,000 rupees from the government last spring to buy seed, because he thought we were going to relinquish Mesopotamia and that he would then be able to keep the money. Next him Syed Hussein Abu Magoter, a charming person who has been deported once for refusing to pay taxes: also enormously rich.

A little way off another, one of the pleasantest people you could meet, famous for a vice not mentioned in England, and other notable crimes. Then an old man with seventeen wives, of whom it is currently reported that he doesn't know all his sons by sight, the number of them approaching three figures. Then Marzuq, who was given 60,000 rupees to build a dam with the labour of his tribe: he built the dam, and kept at least half, and probably more, for his own share, a crime that can't be brought home to him.

So you see my neighbours are interesting people, even when taken singly. What is even funnier to contemplate than their personal delinquencies (most of which are not delinquencies in this country and were not in Turkish times, and mustn't be judged on a European standard) is to contemplate the association in one courtyard (all paying their respects to the hakūmah, and drinking Government sherbet and coffee) of people between whom there are endless blood feuds, and have been in the past many ghrazzus (raids) and even pitched battles. In Turkish times this was a very turbulent district, and the Turk was very weak; consequently a strong sheikh would do what he liked, and one of my old gentlemen, Salman al dhāhir has been a regular king in his time.

Well, there they all were, like a garden party, full of their compliments and flatteries—a funny people. You find them to the life in Doughty; which you should read if you want to know about Arabs.

The doctor came over on Saturday and spent the night, and brought me some stuff which cured me, and I am now very fit again. Your letters describing all the things in the garden have made my mouth water dreadfully—particularly I should like some potatoes, which are still unknown here. Your letters of August 20 arrived here on [September] 23rd, which is marvellous speed; and with them the *Mercury* and your photo as a Girl Guide [Commissioner], and very good it is. I am longing to see the interview! ¹

Address to the Assembled Sheikhs:

Verily my heart is altogether friendly to you, but my tongue is stupid and knows not how to explain everything

¹ In a local paper.

that I want to say in this company. The Arabic tongue is very difficult for Englishmen, and I must learn it little by little, but after three or four months with luck (i.e. Insha'allah) I shall be able to tell you all that is in my heart, and understand also all that is spoken or written by you, and this is always in my hope.

Besides Arabic I have many things to learn in Shāmiyah, e.g. about the river and crops and everything on your lands. Everyone of you knows, without my telling you; that it is all very different from my country of England, and therefore all the harder to learn.

To-day I want to tell you that I shall visit your lands as soon as possible, and this first is my intention. We have to finish many things before flood-season, banks, channels, breaches, etc., and with luck the Government will be able to help you in what is necessary and possible, for its object is to increase the wealth of this country, and from this comes increase of your wealth. A big job and not very easy: in the past harder because of the war; but in the future with luck there will occur a wonderful change, and I shall do all I can to help it, and this is always in my hope.

After a short tour to Abu Shora, his northern sub-district headquarters (September 25-26), partly in a leaky boat and partly on an Arab horse with an Arab saddle—'incredibly uncomfortable, very narrow, with sharp peak in front and behind, but the horse went like the wind'—and in very oppressive, cloudy weather with a hot wind, he returned by Kufa and Najaf to find an accumulation of work.

A question about the rice taxation produced a very curious incident. He writes to his father (October 1):

I was ordered to call a meeting of persons interested, i.e. the large landholders (for there are no real owners) who grow rice, to try and persuade them to accept a fixed assessment this harvest; i.e. a flat rate of so many pounds per acre as the Government's share, which has always been recognised as being one-third of the whole crop. Ordinarily every bit of crop has to be both measured and assessed, and this is open to many abuses. They, however, had expected a lower rate than the one we were told to give

them; the meeting became very heated (I didn't join the discussion, being unable) and eventually they refused, so we've got to measure and assess. Now comes the incident. One of them, Hajji Juwad, a man with a clean record and a strong face, owning much rich rice land, was very much in favour of accepting, and he alone stood up at all on the Government side. He made some vigorous remarks about the current bribery of smaller Government officials, which was brave if not rash. Next day a few others turned on him in my presence, and said they were all good Muslims, Government officials and all, and he ought not to have said such things! Meanwhile one of these same Government officials serving in the office, having heard Hajji Juwad—for he spoke up well—wrote a great petition to me saying that he quite admitted the truth of what Hajji Juwad said, and it made him so much ashamed of his companions—not himself of course, oh no, he's much too pure to look at a bribe—that he wished to resign. I had him up and talked him back to his senses, and he told a story of Turkish times, when a Turkish revenue official sitting in a madhif in the district was publicly offered £T1000 on account of the rice harvest. He said, 'No; I want to do the thing fairly'; and he was killed on the spot.

I've at last got rid of a murder case which has been about ever since I came to the district; it turns out to be simple manslaughter and a pure accident. The man who originally brought the charge now admits that his statements were a deliberate lie aimed at getting the man responsible sentenced to death! In a country where everyone lies all the time this is nevertheless a bit thick, and I've committed him for trial in the hope that he'll get at least three times as much punishment as the manslaughterer.

To-day I used my maximum power and sentenced three lovely thieves to six months each. I tried to behave legally, but European ideas of giving the accused a fair show are simply ridiculous when applied to these people. Each side can bring fifty witnesses—their whole tribe—to swear exact opposites: and they do swear exact opposites in front of me, and I get angry and say, Well, surely you'll admit that one of you is lying;—not a bit of

it, they remove their head-coverings and beseech Allah to lengthen my life, or some other rot. So I told them that as they were all liars obviously, and one was evidently a thief, I should give them all the same punishment. But the perpetual appeals to Allah, the sobs and tears, and all the slimy deceit of them, coupled with these oaths of theirs on the Book (which I mayn't hand to them to swear on, because I'm a Christian and so defile it and destroy the meaning of the oath!)—well, they don't make one feel very merciful.

However, my prison is now empty, thank goodness, and long may it so remain. . . . I had to-day a congratulatory address from Ghammas, my Southern area headquarters. I haven't studied it properly yet, but think it says that in honour of my coming they've made a dam all round the town so as never to be flooded again, because they're so grateful to the British Government for sending me, and they hope I shall stay a long time and prosper here! It is signed by above twenty persons, many of them famous scoundrels!

To his mother—

October 6.—To-day is the tenth and last of Muharram and so has been a holiday in the office. Muharram is the period of mourning Hasan and Husain, the sons of 'Ali, son-in-law of the prophet, and the great ceremony of the Shi'ah division of Islam. It's a queer business; many days before one comes on groups of women sobbing their hearts and eyes out, and men chanting and rhythmically beating the breast; and this goes on increasing daily until this last day, when there were great processions of weeping women and flagellating men, largely dressed in black, singing and screaming. The more ecstatic cut or burn themselves, but I saw none of that to-day, and it all passed off very quietly, I'm thankful to say. In this village there are fifty or sixty Jews, but there is no sign of feeling, and I saw them walking about to-day quite happily. I am, of course, the only Nasrāny, but there isn't much fear of my being molested!

All these religious holidays are rather a nuisance in some ways. My head clerk is a Jew, and Saturday was the Fast of the Atonement, so he couldn't come to the

ام البعور حقة حاكم
الكنة مع الاملاء

انتا كاه قصبة الخرم دخل عصبة الفهم تقدم مزبدت كراشنا حقة الحكومة المظلة البريطانية لانا
مع الامتنا في قصبة حقتك حاكماً سناً في ام البعور قصبة عسبتنا المذكورة حيث اتق في سنين الاظية
بكل سنة وقت طفيان المياه يستولي الماء على قصبتنا فنكون ملوحيين الاسترضه بمنع الماء عن مسكننا
وفي طريق على بيوتنا واموالنا مع الفرق حتى اتنا لم نزل نجز عن المذافه فدخل الماء في القصبة فيجرب
تلم نظرتنا ولما حضرتك حلتكم بمركز ام البعور ووافقت بلادنا وناظرتموها بعين رؤفتكم امرتكم على
المتا برأتنا على روفه محطكم القصبة وبناء على امر حقتكم العالي اجتمعت كمتا بر وعلما وكونت باع

مختار

ابن عبد الله

حنيفة



عبد النور



عبد الله



حنيفة



عبد الله



المدحوي طاهر



الحكيم



جامع محمد



الرئيسية



الحكم



حنيفة



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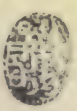
عبد العزيز



عبد الله

للصحة

مختار



عبد الله



الصالح عزوز



عبد الله

مختار



مختار



المعري



مختار



مختار



office. Friday is always a holiday for the clerks, etc., and, since I've been here alone, the office has been shut four days for Muslim festivals! . . . I should like to have photographed the Muharram procession; it was a funny, fascinating sight; but I thought it best not, as many of the participants are half delirious with enthusiasm, and one doesn't wish to give offence. . . .

On Friday I had a wonderful meal with a sheikh, whose rice I had been inspecting. He sat next me, and insisted on breaking up my chicken into dainty bits with his own fingers! There were two madhifs there, and all the servants were collected in the lower one: the meal consisted of about a dozen roast fowls, half a sheep, and lots of vegetables and rice: also a rather solid sweet of some sort. . . .

I worked three whole days last week, and four the week before, without an interpreter. I feel I am getting on a bit, and I now have simple cases on my own. I can generally get to the point at which obviously both sides are lying, and the evidence for the prosecution comes out on the side of the defence. I then stop the case, and if possible fine both parties for having caused a breach of the peace. In the madhif I pretend to understand very much more than I do: but I can practically always guess what they're talking about, and from there it's not very far to a non-committal reply! . . .

I don't think I've given you a very clear idea of my day. If it's an office day, I get up between 6.30 and 7.30: if I am early, I do some learning Arabic words before breakfast. I dress *very* slowly and breakfast on scrambled eggs, bread and butter, tea, water-melon, and dates about 8 A.M. I come back from the office to a light lunch of either fish, eggs, or a little meat with rice, cucumber and tomatoes, again followed (for lack of sweets) by water-melon and dates. Then I lie down, unless I write a letter or do some work first, on my roof in the shade with a book, from about 2 to 4 P.M., when tea is brought, just the drink, nothing to eat with it. Then back to the office, and after the office a walk of two or three miles, very often up the river to a jolly bank from which I watch the sunset. Then I come home, read or write for a bit, then have my bath and change for dinner, which is at 7.30, just when the

muezzin sounds the call to prayer next door. The servants go away and lock up the house about 8.30 P.M., when dinner is finished. I read or write till about 9.30, and then to bed on the roof under a gorgeous moon. My dinner consists of soup, or sometimes fish, chicken and rice, or stuffed tomatoes and rice, followed by a kind of milk dish called mahallabi, which is rather filling, but good.

If I go riding I start about 8, ride or walk round crops till 11 or 12, then go into the madhif and stay till about 3—the food generally appears about three hours after one first appears on the spot, as the women set to work the moment the Hākim is seen coming, it being always assumed that he will stay to eat: and it is, of course, a great offence to them if one doesn't. In that case one gets back about 4 or later, has tea and a bath, and doesn't go out again.

I need hardly say that I live astonishingly cheaply: in fact I spend very little more than my allowance. . . . Prices in the village are in some ways high, in others very low; I get two eggs for an anna, and a fowl for 8d. or 10d., but in Turkish times one got eight eggs a penny, so there has been a bit of a rise. Imported things are, of course, very dear—glasses, knives, forks, etc., cost a rupee or more each! . . .

To Lady Mary Murray—

Umm al Ba'rur, October 12.— . . . It's Sunday evening, and again I'm dining with Azra very soon. He's such a nice old man, a real good sort, and, like all Jews, deeply and intensely grateful for the presence here of British government. You will agree that he's a good old man, for when all the leading merchants (of my town) assembled in the office the other day and we were discussing municipal improvements, they all demanded a bridge as the first necessity except Azra, and he wants a school.

This must be the first Sunday of the new term, and I am thinking a lot of Oxford and you all. Living alone, it's queer how strongly pictures of the past come up before one and visualise themselves almost into a momentary reality. I see now very vividly how amazingly easy life was at Oxford, not I mean that one didn't do hard things or wasn't often bored or stupid—that's the fate of being

civilised too much—but that there were always such lots of nice things to do, nice people to go and talk to, nice rooms to sit in, nice things to eat, and all this nice part with so incredibly little personal effort. I'm not regretting the absence of all these things one bit, and I'm glad not to be going back to Balliol to-morrow or the next day: but the strain of being absolutely dependent upon oneself for every single thing, and having to decide unaided on every question from the ownership of 5000 acres of land to what one will have (and how to cook it) for dinner, whatever else it does for one, certainly emphasises in one's memory the smooth running of civilised life.

I won't say that this is not a better life than any I could be having at my age in England, nor even that it's a bigger one: that it's both good and big, however, is very certain. What it lacks of course absolutely is a foil; not that one misses specific things, even music, at all grievously, but that one has absolutely nothing to replace the whole part of life, other than work, which even when soldiering was never long absent. I have my books, and they are an untold joy to me, and I thank you many times when I take one down: and I am about to make a garden, which will be great fun. . . .

. . . The people are really rather proud to have a British officer in the district, and I had a most delightful address of welcome in the real flowery language of the East, which you would be amused to read—they referred to themselves as 'my flock,' and a routine order which I gave was referred to as 'the gracious attention of the eye of your compassion'! Now I must go and dress for Azra.

He continues on Monday, October 13:

I had an awfully good dinner, and it was enjoyable. Things are always a little stiff, because the host cannot do anything at all, even sit down, unless asked by the principal guest, which is pushing formality a little far. . . .

I haven't had any English mail for three weeks, nor seen a newspaper or news report since I came here six weeks ago. I hear amazing rumours of a railway strike, and am wondering very much what is happening. In the remote existence which I lead, I get absorbed in the district

extraordinarily quickly, and the variety of the questions which assail one makes me almost indifferent to the existence of an outside world at all.

After a pleasant visit from Major Norbury (October 5-12) and a short tour of the district, during which they were met at one point by 'a cavalcade of about twenty Arabs, sheikhs, sirkals (sub-sheikhs), their sons, and agents, etc., which was extraordinarily picturesque,' he returned to work in the office. He writes to his father, October 13:

One [of the petitions] was a pretty cool request! There had been a case of rape some time ago, and according to tribal custom the offender entered into an agreement to hand over one woman as compensation, or two if he failed to produce one by a certain date. This is a private arrangement sanctioned by tribal and religious custom, and has, so far, nothing whatever to do with the Government. But the agreement not having been fulfilled, the plaintiff appealed to the Government to enforce fulfilment! When he comes before me, I hope to muster all my Arabic and tell him plainly what I think of such tribal custom; and then commute his right into a money payment for damages.

The weather still tends to be very hot and even stuffy, with a good deal of not very pleasant wind, but it's cooling off slowly. There's a good deal of sickness about, and I am provided with a few medicines which I deal out to all comers as far as I can. I hope to get a dispensary here very soon: it will do a lot of good.

I've been simply inundated with land disputes lately; they are a most disheartening subject to tackle. Even when a long dispossessed owner has a perfectly valid claim supported by documents, one can't afford to give him restitution, for the simple reason that, if you once start to redress wrongs committed by 'the late Government' you could never stop.

To his mother—

Ghammas (on tour), October 19.— . . . I left Umm al Ba'rur on the 15th and am out measuring rice fields: at the moment, I am sitting in the tent I described to you in

a letter at the beginning of September, and on the floor before me about a dozen persons are polishing off the remains of an excellent dinner, which I and my own officials of the measuring Board started in on. We are working incredibly hard, and you can tell that I'm pretty fit when I say that I am on the go over the roughest ground, often in water and mud to the knees, and sometimes above, for seven, or even eight, hours a day. The programme is as follows : I get up at dawn, which is now 6 A.M., have a hasty bath and breakfast of bread and eggs and tea, and we start out at 7 exactly. To the fields is about half an hour's walk, and then we start in, only stopping for a drink of leban, a sort of sour milk which is wonderfully sustaining and thirst-quenching (I must have drunk two quarts of it to-day !) at any group of huts one may come to. It is always brought out if asked for and given gratis to the whole party—a dozen or so—as even the poorest fellah who has no land will have a herd of sheep and cattle. The measuring is done by means of ropes, and can only be checked properly by personally following the rope-men slap through the rice, which stands as much as four feet high in six inches of water ! I did this thoroughly the first two days, and satisfied myself as to the reliability of the men, and now I tend to sit on the edge of each patch and watch them as they go : but even so there's a lot of country to cover, and I think I've probably walked ten to twelve miles each day. Needless to say I'm jolly tired, but none the worse, and feel very fit. We stop about 11.30 or noon in any hut or tent that may be handy, and servants appear with the food—cold fowl, bread, hard-boiled eggs, and dates, and I eat and lie down till 1.30 or 2, when we start in again, drinking leban once or twice if we can get it, and arriving here about 5—but to-day we didn't get back till after 6. Then tea, if not too late, a thorough bath and shave, and then about an hour's work totting up the day's account and comparing my figures with the Arabic clerk—we have only agreed once these four days, and each time he has been wrong, but he is a very nice fellow, and well educated. Dinner appears about 8 or a little before, and I go to bed about nine. Needless to say, I eat a very large dinner (with my fingers, of course) but I don't sleep any the worse for it. . . . I expect the

work will take another week. Fortunately the weather is becoming delicious with a real nip about the nights. You would be amused to see me at work—a shirt and pair of exiguous shorts, no stockings, brown muddy legs, and muddy shoes!

P.S.—Except for seeing the Major to-morrow, I shall have gone ten days or more without speaking a word of English!

To his father—

Shinafiyah, with Saiyid Husain Abu Magoter, October 24.
—To-morrow we finish measuring rice down here, and next day I go back with some regret to Umm al Ba'rur. I have enjoyed these ten days enormously, and am very much the better for them. It has been very heavy work, and one awful day when I was unwell I thought I should have to give it up; my legs are all skinned and cracked by the sun and the rice and the reeds and the mud; but the open-air life with gorgeous weather—days like a hot English summer and cold nights—very lovely country, and freedom from the bothers of judicial work in the office, which in the present state of my Arabic are a real strain, have combined to make it a very great success. I have also heard that my Board has done much better than the others, and though this is due mainly to my subordinates, who are the most marvellous workers, I believe that the fact of my going with them through swamps and everything has pleased them enormously, and also kept them up to the mark. There is no doubt that, as long as he has an Englishman with him, the Arab is an ideal worker, and I have been amazed every day at their cheerfulness, reliability, and absolute lack of grumbling.

. . . The only unpleasantness came, as was to be expected, from the big rice owners: for here, as everywhere else, the rich are meaner and more grasping than the poor. We worked seven days entirely on one owner's land . . . and you will have some idea of his wealth when I say that the tax payable by him on this rice for this year alone is £10,000 and more. . . . Yet this man's agent, who took us round, was always trying to cheat us, always wrangling about ten square yards or less, always whining to me with his soapy compliments. . . .





RICE FIELDS.

(On left : Khalil Effendi, Mamur of Ghammas.)



THE RICE HARVEST.

(Left to right : Saiyid Mandhur, Khalil Effendi, Saiyid Tuggi.)

. . . [My host] lives in a delicious place, in a great plain covered with flocks and herds, donkeys, and the black tents of the tribesmen, stretching over to the south, where five miles off the real Syrian desert begins across the river near Shinafiyah. His rice is nearly all harvested, and looks almost like English harvest fields, in golden sheaves; and the river here is split up into twenty or more little streams, which everywhere make cataracts, so that the place resounds with running water. Away to the north are the gardens all along the three main channels below Ghammas—lines of willows, fig trees, dates, and pomegranates, and the openness of this plain gives one exactly the same sensation of freedom and breadth as the top of a high hill on the Downs.

To his father—

Umm al Ba'rur, November 5.—Here I am back again after a most strenuous week of toil. I got out to the rice on October 29. . . . I set to work, and instead of supervising, actually took charge myself and directed every operation. This means walking all round boundaries, etc., so as to get an idea of the shape of fields, and it is frightfully hard work! There were great compensations, however; in fourteen days the Board [with a subordinate in charge] did 4500 mesharas (a meshara is five-eighths of an acre), and in seven days with me they did 4200. . . . Several members of the Board expressed their relief at my coming; while the principal sheikh I was dealing with, a most delightful person called Hajji Juwad, paid me some most amusing compliments on my Mohandisiyah (engineering skill). This was because in big areas I worked largely on sketch plans, a novelty which they understood and appreciated very easily.

Unfortunately, I went lame in both legs, cutting one rather badly in some reeds where the water was nearly to my hips, and now I can hardly put on a boot, which is a nuisance. Yesterday and to-day I have worked on horseback, and as there has been very little mud it was tolerable, but I find five hours in the saddle at a walking pace more tiring than eight hours on foot, and when at midday to-day we found ourselves close to home I was very glad to knock off. We've got one more day's work

to be done to-morrow, a long ride out and then a bothersome journey back along the edge of a great lake, doing little strips here and there ; and then the rice measurement will be finished.

I have enjoyed it immensely, and except for the last two days, when I have been a bit over-tired (and rather short-tempered in consequence!) have been extraordinarily fit. It has been a regular bailiff's life, and I stereotyped my hours almost exactly—up at dawn, work from 7 to 12 and 2 to 5 or later (occasionally earlier), then tea, one or two hours' work on the day's figures, a bath and shave, dinner, and a few hundred lines of 'The Ring and the Book' before bed. My breakfast this last week has been from four to eight boiled eggs—the latter figure I reached one day, so my appetite hasn't suffered, and the amount of cooked rice I have eaten is incredible. Needless to say, I have been entertained for the whole time, and treated more or less like Royalty wherever I went—an amusing combination of work and privilege! . . .

[As to newspaper comment on Mesopotamia.] There are not five men in England actually in the India Office who know anything about this country, and certainly not five men outside it. Why must journalists always keep up their monstrous pretence of being omniscient? As to agriculture, there are no limits to the amount of land available for cultivation, and the crops are reasonably certain, provided we spend money on irrigation ; but the two great hardships are (a) smallness of population, (b) lack of either wood or stone, of which, of course, there is none within two or three hundred miles N.E. of Baghdad. This makes development slow and costly.

I was interested in your note on Indian corn of which the male plume is fertilized,¹ for in my district a main crop is a thing called *idhra*, which is simply the grain from this male plume : and no cobs at all occur on the plant. It is poor stuff, but sells well apparently—they get 80 to 100 rupees per ton for it ; though of course it takes a lot to make a ton.

I had a funny experience the other night. When on tour, I made it a rule always to dine in the madhif with

¹ A 'sport' that had occurred in the variety grown in the garden at home. It is said not to be unusual.

members of the Board and all the crowd that is always to be found in a madhif. One night, when all had just been cleared away, coffee served, and pipes were going, suddenly I became aware of some one climbing into a high chair in the middle of the madhif (there isn't much light) and the man next me muttered 'Mustn't smoke now,' and before I knew where I was we were off with what you might call evening prayers. This was the private chaplain, so to speak, of my sheikh, and he began intoning in a biting nasal drawl the story of Husain, which is to the Shi'ah very much what the Crucifixion is to us. In two minutes practically everyone except the sheikh and myself was sobbing as if his heart would break, real tears pouring down their cheeks. The story went on for nearly twenty minutes, and they sobbed nearly all the time. I couldn't understand much owing to the intoning, which was highly dramatic, but of course it was in very good Arabic, with the pure heavy pronunciation of the South. Then suddenly reference was made to our host, Hajji Juwad, and the Mullah vanished as quickly as he had come; and in two or three minutes all were talking, smoking, and drinking coffee as though nothing had ever worried them!

To his mother—

Umm al Ba'rur, November 11.— . . . The great majority of the townspeople are away on pilgrimage at Karbala; as we came down the river on Sunday evening we passed ten great boatloads decorated with banners, etc., and full of chanting and drumming, being towed upstream. I suppose at least 300 people have gone from this place alone, or about 20 per cent. Fancy 20 per cent. of Bromley setting out for Canterbury by road every year!

. . . I wish I could give you some idea of Najaf. My flying visits there from this remote countryside give me a curious photographic impression about which I should like, if only I had time, to write a proper study. There are really two impressions: first, that of the city itself as a symbol. You come up by car from Abu Sukhair over ten miles of yellow desert; on the right, roughly four miles off, is a dark green bordering of palms along the river which runs parallel, on the left only 500 yards away

is a cliff, dropping 50 to 100 feet on the side furthest from you, so that of the enormous expanse of the true desert beyond you see no sign. At first nothing is visible before one but desert, then suddenly a mirage in which, floating just above the desert, you see the dim outline of the city (as if an island in the sea), and in it the one touch of reality, the gleam of gold on the golden dome. As you go on the form changes continually in detail, though not in effect, until suddenly the mirage disappears, and from a distance of perhaps four miles you see the city itself, great battlements all around, outside miles of tombs, many with blue domes, and, towering above, the great golden dome and golden minarets—all this standing straight up out of the desert, utterly isolated, and extraordinarily unreal.

It is the most extraordinarily romantic sight, and the romance is heightened by one's first impression of the pilgrims. At this moment the place is full of Persians on their way to Karbala, and taking Najaf on the pilgrimage; for these two cities are very closely connected by Shi'ah history. These Persians are in their way extraordinarily picturesque, though amazingly dirty—very different from Arabs in this respect. They wear blue smocks mostly, and a funny cylindrical grey felt cap, which bulges at the top and presses forward the tips of the ears by its tightness below. Their hair is very long and shaggy, they are wonderfully stupid and animalesque as well: but they're striking figures. And anyway, there's something awfully romantic at the thought of a man riding on his great white ass or little mountain pony 500 or more miles down the great road to Kermanshah and on to Khaniquin, and then over the desert by one of many tracks this portentous journey, of mountains, plains, and deserts. Of course they come in groups, and there's not now much risk of robbery or murder, but it's a tall order.

Anyway that's the first impression; what is the second?

A city so vicious that the most sober account of it could not be printed in England: one can only say that every vice known to the most unpleasant Greek and Roman authors (not much of a credit, this, to a classical education) flourishes there publicly.





NAJAF.

(a, General view ; b, The funeral party of Ula'wi al Rukhaiyis, Sheikh of Al Shibl, entering Najaf ; c, View of the Najaf crowd during the Dukhul.)

A city in which profiteering goes on, not in ten or fifty per cent., but in 1000 per cent. and upwards, the victims being of course the pilgrims.

A city of corpses, the bazaar seeing all day an endless stream of bodies, many reeking abominably, uncoffined and only wrapped in rough cloths, being carried from the temple to burial, or from the road to the temple.

A city in which hardly a day passes during high pilgrimage seasons but what one or more wretched pilgrim is found dying of hunger : and how many die, especially on the road back, which numbers of them lightheartedly begin without one coin in their pockets, God knows.

So you see, if from the first impression of romance one is tempted to regret the coming of modern inventions, meaning a water-supply, a railway, and motor-cars, and all the rest of it, from the second one gets a tremendous repulsion. There's nothing fine about these pilgrimages : the soul of man is always heroic when he tackles any big undertaking, and every one of these pilgrims does something heroic in making the pilgrimage : but it's the wrong sort of heroism.

They say all pilgrim cities are foul, and that there is little to choose between Mecca, Karbala, Najaf, and Jerusalem. The religious life certainly seems to breed the beastlier vices, and it is precisely among the holiest men that the worst abominations are rampant. And yet Islam, cleared of post-Koranic accretions and all these hateful Shi'ah traditions, is on the whole a clean and decent religion adapted to a nomad people in an early stage of civilization.

I expect I shall write a book some day.

To change the subject abruptly while leaving it much the same, when I was in Najaf on Saturday they told me that there would be a Communion service on Friday morning (Friday being our Sunday here). So of course I am going, if it really is arranged, and we're going to put in a conference as well. This will be the first service I shall have been to since Church Stretton. . . .

This may be the last mail you will get before Christmas, and so I send you my very, very loving good wishes to all of you and to Aunt Nelly for that and for the New Year : and how I wish I could be with you. As a very small

token I am sending you three Arabian coffee-pots by this mail : take them to a jeweller and get them polished up. They are quaint, and all hammered by hand ; and I couldn't find anything else that could be posted.

I haven't had my birthday letters yet.

To his father—

Umm al Ba'rur, November 18.— . . . I went [to Najaf] on Thursday afternoon, and had a most troublesome journey ; the water on the river being frightfully low owing to the operation of the Barrage, my launch stuck about half a dozen times, and I did not get to Abu Shora till dark. I had, by the way, a surprising cargo on board—my servant, Daud and his servant, three Persian police from Najaf, and a prisoner I had that morning sentenced to three months for abduction—a man with a face like a vicious hyena—so we were a bit overloaded. I drove the car myself from Abu Shora to Kufa, four miles, as the road is very bad indeed, and then we had seven very troublesome miles of desert to Najaf. I got in at 7.30 unscathed, and very glad to have arrived. On Friday we had our Communion service—just six of us ; and afterwards a long conference on revenue matters. I slept there that night, and on Saturday morning returned to Abu Shora, where I spent two nights, returning here yesterday evening by launch. . . .

. . . I was busy all the time at Abu Shora on land protection works, and you would have been amused to see me conducting two mejlisses or conferences. The first, on Sunday, related to what is called a sedd, or flood bank built to stop up an old breach in the river bank : if this is not done the flood water comes over the bank and pours down over the cultivated land, blocking irrigation channels with silt, spoiling the tilth, etc. So we summoned everyone whose lands would be flooded if this 'sedd' were to break. I took them to the spot in the launch, we decided on what we wanted, and I took them back to Abu Shora, where I announced my view as to a fair distribution of labour. The work is construction of a bank of earth and reeds, 120 metres by 15 by 3, and I divided it thus : A 40 metres, B 35, C and D 10 each, E, F, G, H, I, and J 25 metres between them. So you see I had a pretty

invidious task; for I had not accurate means of judging their relative resources, and any frank discussion is impossible, owing to their tribal feuds—still, of course, they accepted, as they had to. But co-operation, which is an essential preliminary to self-determination, can't be seen in Irāq these thirty years, I fancy.

The second conference, on Monday, was simpler; the question being simply one of building a new earth bank on the ruins of the old one, and only digging is necessary, no reeds, etc., the cutting and carrying of which cost money. All the people concerned are very little men too, so I could be as rude with them as I wished. Here I had no facts whatever to go on, so I divided the work into halves, and the parties into two temporarily homogeneous fractions, sealing the matter by taking a deed of agreement signed by eight signet rings and three thumb-prints—most of them can't write.

Most of these people and the little fellows E, F, G, H, I, J of the preceding day belong to an enormous and rapidly disintegrating tribe, the Bani Hasan. They can't and won't keep up their cultivation properly, their tribal organization has gone to pieces owing to the scoundrelly incompetence of their sheikh, and our authority, of course, prevents them from their natural livelihood of thieving and raiding. What to do with them no one knows, but I expect in time they will realise the material advantage of sober agricultural life. At present their lands are mostly worthless, owing to neglect.

I was rather piqued at your remark that you would be glad to hear of my moving to Baghdad to start the work there. I expect you have a slight feeling at the back of your mind that district work is not safe. The only place where it is not safe is in Kurdistan, where two more officers have just been ambushed; down here I am every bit as safe as at home, and received always as a friend. Of course a magistrate, wherever he is, can't always be popular with thieves; and in any Muslim country you *may* run up against a fanatic, but these dangers are very remote indeed, and I see no reason whatever to think that there's anything to worry about for a moment. If I were transferred to Kurdistan it would be another story. One wears uniform here, but never goes about armed or with an armed

escort, it would be an insult ; and one never meets anything but politeness and hospitality. I shouldn't say that the Government is popular : the shock after Turkish times, when for practical purposes there was no Government here, is very great ; and the rich haven't yet decided whether security and straight dealing quite compensate for the inability to bribe or use physical force : while the poor, who have most to gain from our coming, find it difficult to get access to us honestly, because we're bound to uphold tribal rights to a great extent, and [they] have been so corrupted by thousands of years of misgovernment that they can't really conceive justice in a legal sense. It's a sad country in this way, that it's utterly without any self-consciousness, and utterly without a ghost of public spirit. I very much doubt the applicability to such conditions of the mandatory idea, and suspect that nations only realise themselves by blood ; so that when India and when Irāq can throw us out by a bloody revolution, we having taught them to do it by education, free Press, etc., then only will these two countries be capable of starting on their own. But I hope I'm wrong.

Anyway I digress ; and if we're not much liked—what Government ever is ?—at all events we're respected, feared, known to be honest, and considered absurdly tender-hearted ; while all intelligent people—they are few, as elsewhere—know that we are the only people who can or will do anything for them. Is this a solid foundation to work on ? I don't know—I'll tell you at the end of my year : but meanwhile please don't think District work dangerous ; and surely you agree that it's a much better life than an office in Baghdad ? I don't know what the latter might be or develop into, and if I am sent for of course I shall go ; but as far as a fine life goes, District work has it. The only thing is, it's a bit too fine ; being always left to decide everything unaided, with everyone saying 'Whatever you order will be our delight,' 'You are our father,' etc. (which entirely precludes the collection of reasonable opinions), one wishes one was a superman and really *knew* a bit about things.

Hākīm means governor : Hākīm is doctor, quite a different word, though from the same root ; the idea is 'one who gives decisions' (hukum). But my title is plain 'Captain.' . . .

To his mother—

Umm al Ba'rur, November 23.—The weather has suddenly changed to winter, and the mornings and nights are really cold, the days delicious and like the best of an English May. But—there is no glass in the windows, no fireplaces, and stoves are hard to get: so the builder is coming in to-morrow and I am going to make a proper winter room facing South with a good fireplace, quite tiny and furnished with rugs. All the houses here are built purely for summer, which is absurd, as the winter lasts five months and is quite cold. . . .

. . . I have spent three weary hours this afternoon in what you might call two Committees, though, as I occasionally had to apply the closure by saying sharply 'Hādhā amrī' (this is my order), which is a most satisfactory thing to be able to say to a verbose Committee—you try it on X and suchlike gentry—but is hardly democratic, the name Committee would hardly be applicable.

The first was a party of two sheikhs and four sirkals (sub-sheikhs) representing three tribes, whom we require to build a flood-bank round this village. Not unnaturally they jibbed a good deal, for it does them no financial good, and no one can look one inch beyond his own pocket. So I had to say firmly that it was my order, and we forced upon them a written agreement. This is of course no innovation: it is universally admitted in this country that the Government can call on sheikhs for labour and materials at any time, and they only jib because they always think that someone else is getting off too lightly, and that if they only argue enough an Englishman will think that they have got a case. This year I've already arranged work for nearly every tribe of importance, and divided it as best I can, so, as my own conscience is clear, I don't mind appearing to tread heavily upon their objections: but it is a good thing that there is no local Press, and that they hate and distrust one another far more than they do the Government—this, of course, refers purely to the rich. They squabbled like cats about the division of labour, and I promised to ride over the ground with them myself to-morrow, to see fair play.

The second meeting was with leading townspeople to discuss several matters. The first was to discuss raising

the level of certain streets which are liable to flood, and other flood works in the town itself. Here, of course, there is no sheikh to deal with, and it is hard to get anything done, except by spending public money, which is undesirable on principle in a community of this sort. Eventually I had practically to order them to form a Committee, which will report in a week (a) what exactly is necessary, (b) what householders can afford to do their own frontages, (c) what arrangements they suggest to share the cost and labour of the remainder between rich and poor. I shall be interested to see the result.

Then we discussed profiteering, the existence of which of course they denied. There being no bank, no accounts, and a lot of barter, I don't see what one can do. We have found one case, however, of a merchant buying up all the retailers' barley (bought by them in scraps from peasants) to ship off for sale at a higher wholesale price in Hillah—this shows where the profits are made; fortunately we were able to stop his boat with two tons on board, and I've issued orders, which I hope may prevent this abuse of small traders and buyers. The only scheme put up is to buy a lot of rice at Government price (i.e. the rate we charge our tax at) direct from the local growers, and sell it to shops for sale in them at a fixed rate. If we did this here we could at present sell rice, make a profit ourselves, and give the shopkeepers a profit, for about 50 rupees a ton (25 per cent.) less than market rates: but we should have donkeys, camels, and boats from Persia, the Desert, and all Irāq, like the sand of the sea, invading our village and buying up everything within a month. I wish we knew more of the history of food control, for I can't see how Government buying can succeed unless Government buys the whole crop and stock of any particular commodity, and thus cuts out for ever the wholesale merchant. Good crops and increased production seem to be no check on the profiteering abilities of the merchant even in this country, despite bad communications; since I came here (long after the barley harvest) the price of barley has doubled, and it's all going to Baghdad.

Our third and last point was to discuss how income-tax could be levied in this country, for whereas the farmers pay 30 per cent. on all crops, merchants don't pay a penny

in direct taxation. I shan't bore you with details of this discussion: they were utterly stupid and without any suggestions, each distrusting his neighbour too much to be candid. If we have to levy this tax, which would only be an act of simple justice, as merchants profit more from our expenditure than anyone else, I believe it would end in my having to see every merchant personally and telling him what I supposed his income to be and what tax I was going to take from him, leaving him to disprove my figures if possible!

One does feel most awfully in this type of community the lack of what we call professional gentlemen, the parson, the local doctor and banker, the retired Colonel and the Boy Scout master, not to speak of inspired people like the Mrs. Manns, Miss Wigans,¹ etc. I can appeal to absolutely no one but merchants or landlords, other than my own Government servants, who give me any answer they think I want. As for asking the poor, it is more profitable to ask a gramophone record: they have only one parrot-dirge—'We have no resource except your Honour and the mercy of Allah!' I suppose our efforts in India and Egypt show that it is possible to introduce the idea of public spirit to some extent, though how far it can exist in a Muslim country is very doubtful. But the utter incomprehensibility of such a thing at present, without any further arguments, shows that the only way to govern the country is to say 'Hādha amrī' and go on saying it, and this is government by force and nothing else. The only alternative is to quit. . . .

To Mr. F. F. Urquhart—

Umm al Ba'rur, November 25.—I'm in an awfully good temper. . . . The two causes are, first that I've been out riding this afternoon—a most delicious ride, in perfect cool weather like an early English autumn: and no one could help feeling in harmony with life on coming in from such. Secondly, the man I was riding with, called Hajji Humūd, is an honest man and gave me a straight answer to a straight question—of all the sheikhs and other 'gentlemen' of any district, I have only met

¹ The two women members of the Kent County Education Committee.

two others as yet of whom I can say the same. . . . I was riding with him to a place where his tribe want to build a dam, so as to grow rice next year. Two years ago the Government paid the whole cost of this dam, about £5000. I looked at the spot, got details of cost and labour, and then asked him what he was expecting of the Government. To which he replied: 'We mean to grow rice next year; we've got this dam: we've divided the expense and labour between us; we need and should like financial help from the Government; but if you can't or won't give it us, we shall build the dam just the same, for it's a vital necessity to us.' I can't begin to show you how different this is from the ordinary replies of fawning sheikhs, whose mouths are full of 'God prolong your life,' 'Look upon your flock, with the glorious eye of your compassion and mercy,' etc., etc. 'You are our father and we are your obedient children'—I look the part, don't I?—and then when it comes to the point, evasions, lies, shifting of responsibility, etc., etc. A governor in a country governed as this is inevitably spends nine-tenths of his time dealing with the nastier sides of human nature, and does get most awfully depressed by them: therefore Heaven be thanked that there are even here a few Hajji Humūds to cheer one up. . . .

To his sister—

Umm al Ba'rur, November 27.—I don't envy you really at Oxford, except for one thing, which I blush to confess—and that is the comforts and ease of life in [his uncle's] home; I do feel at times what a blessing it would be to drop into some person's rooms and have some music or talk rot about the universe or go on the river: but mostly I'm tremendously absorbed in my funny old District and should be most frightfully sorry to leave. . . . But I do often think with regret of [various culinary delights] that money can't procure in Umm al Ba'rur, or in all Irāq for that matter! Not but what my cook isn't coming on a lot, and what he can do he does very well. But, as he told me candidly the other day in a burst of confidence, when I praised a fowl he had done most beautifully (stuffed with almonds and raisins), he doesn't really know how to cook, being a coffee-man by

profession: 'I only use my imagination,' he said, 'and the result is as God wills!'

To show you what these people are like, here is a story of my cook. I bought some bacon the other day, this being of course unclean meat to a Muslim. So I called him in, and said 'Look here, this is pig: I am perfectly willing to cook it myself whenever I want it, if you don't wish to touch it or think you will go to Hell for it.' So he protested violently that he couldn't hear of such a thing as my cooking my own breakfast, that he was not a bigot, etc., and indeed that he himself wouldn't mind *eating* pig. A few days later my assistant, Daud, was talking to his cook, who said to him: 'The hākim has bacon in his house; and poor Shākir (my cook) what will he say to God in the Day of Judgment now that he is forced to touch bacon?' I don't believe Shākir really cares two hoots, but that, having cooked the bacon, he couldn't resist going to tell everyone what an awful thing it was and how he couldn't help being damned. But he goes on cooking it for me quite happily, and never gives a sign of his objection, whether real or fancied. This sort of thing, however, shows how easily Indian mutinies and such are raised out of these preposterous religions. . . .

I've spent a regular bureaucratic day to-day, seven hours in the office. This morning I investigated a man-slaughter which, thank goodness, turned into a clear case of justifiable homicide: and indeed I almost congratulated the man who fired the fatal shot on ridding us from a professional brigand; then I translated a lengthy Arabic analysis of a tribe's land tenure, of which very obscure subject we are trying to learn some details; then I read about half a dozen Arabic reports on irrigation works, etc., saw one or two petitions, wrote some official letters, and generally spent a useful four hours. This afternoon we had two 'mejlisses' or assemblies, which are worth describing.

The first concerned some people called Janabat. These are a secret society, or freemasonry of professional thieves, who ramificate all over Irāq. They are such experts that no method of protection against them can be devised except to subsidise them. Consequently every sheikh pays so many of them—six or so for an average

tribe—on condition that if anything whatever is stolen from the tribe they will either produce the thing stolen or pay the cost themselves. The method of assessing the cost is for the man robbed and the head Janābi to go together before a holy man at Kufa¹ and swear a great oath as to what has been stolen : the Janābi accepts this oath as evidence ! The Government is compelled to subsidise these beauties in towns, just as each tribe does in the country : and here in Umm al Ba'rur I have ten of them who get 30 rupees a month each from me, in return for which, when anyone is robbed, they generally produce the stolen goods, though not always, by means best known to themselves.

Lately, however, things haven't been too satisfactory, and there's been an outcrop of small thefts here, so we had a meeting consisting of eight sheikhs and sirkals (sub-sheikhs), representing the two tribes which surround this town, and all their and our Janabat, nineteen of the finest ruffians you ever saw. Daud made a great speech saying what scoundrels they all were, and then wrote out an enormous document which they all signed, seven with signet rings and twelve with thumb impressions, acknowledging that they were all responsible for the discovery of all thefts in the neighbourhood, and then we made the sheikhs, etc., all sign underneath a promise to hand over any of them at any instant and to do their best to watch them. We did this more to create an impression than anything else, as the average Arab doesn't like signing a document which is going to be locked up in the records of the Government, and has a childish faith in the efficacy of the written word.

This took about one and a half hours, and then we had a second meeting, of eight sheikhs and sirkals, about a dam which we want to build next year for rice growing. The utility of the dam in a greater or less degree to all the people present was obvious to a child of two, but owing to their combined hatred of the principal party, who I must say is a proper old devil, it took a good hour's cajoling, arguing, and threatening before we could get

¹ From a later letter (February 22) it appears that an even more binding oath is sworn on the tomb of 'Abbas, a descendant of 'Ali, son-in-law of the Prophet, at Karbala.

them to agree on a fair division of the labour and expense. I first made my suggestion, and then they all went for it like dogs for a bone, and eventually ended up by sullenly agreeing almost exactly to my original suggestion. So a great document was written out and signed with eight signet rings before me, and I didn't get out of the office till 5.30 P.M. It was almost as bad as a committee meeting! However, the document means, with luck, an addition of probably 10,000 tons of rice to my harvest next October, so it's something to have done. . . .

To his father—

Umm al Ba'rur, November 29.— . . . After lunch I started trying to make an armchair of reeds and bamboos. I got on quite well and hope to finish in a week or so. I think it may be a success, in which case I shall have it copied by the local mat-makers. No Arab has ever thought of trying to make a comfortable chair, and it's quite impossible to make them understand a drawing or description. . . .

To his mother—

Umm al Ba'rur, December 5.—[After a tour with an irrigation officer to inspect flood banks, camping one 'delicious' night, Saumarez attended a committee at Najaf on important irrigation work.] I could do little or nothing against their hopeless short-sightedness and bitter feuds¹; this wasn't very wonderful, seeing that I had sitting side by side two sheikhs who, when the first political officer arrived at Kufa in 1917, were drawn up with their followers one on each side of the river firing a regular fusillade at one another: and, if they had a chance, they'd do the same to-morrow. However, we got through some work. . . . I got here at 5.30 just as the full moon was beginning to make itself felt over the waning afterglow of sunset—another delicious ride. . . .

[A shooting party consisting of Major Norbury, the judge at Hillah (a New Zealand officer) and his wife was in camp in the Abu Sukhair district, about fifteen miles off.] Hence the rumour in the bazaar here is that the

¹ To Major Cumberbatch he wrote (December 15): 'In the words of a proverb I heard last night, "The Arabs have agreed never to agree."'

Queen of England is touring Shamiyah with Major Norbury : another version is that her husband, a Staff-Colonel who wears a red band on his arm, came down here to arrest the Major and take him to Baghdad. . . .

We had our first proper rain yesterday, a heavy grey sky and a whistling wind, but over the Najaf desert not much wet. At Hillah, however, the railway line was washed away, as it always is when there's rain ! The wind and lowering clouds gave me awful delight. I love the fine, sunny weather, but I feel a great desire sometimes for a bit of storm and wildness. . . .

To his father—

Najaf, December 12.— . . . I had a very strenuous and thoroughly unpleasant time [at Ghammas], entirely on judicial business. One wouldn't mind being a judge if one were able to view things as an outsider : but judging one's own people and always having an eye to the future political effect of any decision is most unpleasant. I got down there on Saturday afternoon, and spent the evening in preparing the programme and getting up cases. On Sunday I spent the entire morning on a very troublesome charge and countercharge of corruption between my two leading officials there ; this went over into the next day, and took altogether about eight hours to elucidate, with inconclusive results, and much dirty linen washed in public. Still, I think the general effect of having had the whole thing out and given both sides a fair hearing is useful. Sunday afternoon I spent in judging a land dispute. . . . Monday I spent in judging another land case in which each side made a counter-claim on the other ; this involved a delicious ride of about 18 miles, and I was for once able to see pretty well how to meet the claims of justice and settle both parties with reasonable fairness. . . . [Landholding here] is incredibly complicated, there being no real titles, no legal documents worth mentioning, no surveys and no fixable boundaries, no truthful evidence, and the greatest bitterness between tribe and tribe ! . . .

. . . All idea of recalling me to Baghdad has been dropped, as they can't think of starting the Publicity Department yet, and are frightfully short of A.P.O.'s.

Naturally I am delighted, as I am far better off here in every way, and have started so much in the District that I could not contemplate leaving it—except, of course, on promotion, which is different—until the end of my year, when alternatives and plans will be clearer.

Yesterday I rode from here to see the tribes working on one of the three great protective works which I have been busy getting settled this last month. It was a delicious ride of ten miles each way; I rode with Wigan,¹ and we had a wonderful reception. The work is known as the breach of Ibn Hayyam, and the task was to build an earth bank 120 metres by 15 by 3. . . . When we arrived four or five hundred men were at work; on seeing us they stopped, formed up by tribes (five in all) and with mattocks held aloft did the traditional war dance, forming a sort of maze and chanting very loud and rhythmically. After a bit of this they all formed one great maze in front of us and went round and round with a tremendous swing. It was a wonderful sight, and most unfortunately I hadn't my camera! Of course the labour is all unpaid: I told the chief people I thought they'd done very well and that the whole district was indebted to them, etc., and we all parted very pleased with one another, and without a grumble or sour word. This is a remarkable thing, as there is very bitter feeling between some of these tribes. . . .

[After about a week at home I shall join Daud at Ghammas] to put in hand a very big scheme of my own for entirely rebuilding Ghammas on a regular town-planning scheme, first raising the ground level about two feet over all. Of this scheme more anon. . . .

He describes it in a letter to Lady Mary Murray, December 23:

The land of Ghammas is almost level with the river, and in flood time below it; consequently when people built a town there each man built himself a little platform of earth on which to put his hut. The holes from which they took the earth at once filled with water, and the result is an indescribable jumble of smells, flies, malaria, and utter filth. So now I'm trying to fill up all the holes

¹ Captain Wigan, A.P.O., Najaf.

and start again. The place is immensely important, does an enormous trade with desert tribes over a large area, and can be made a populous town in time.

[He continues to his mother, December 12, after more particulars of his daily work]: However, I'm so much encouraged by finding that my letters and requests are really being listened to here and that they trust my judgment, that I go back very full of appetite for work.

To Miss D. B. Wilson—

December 13.—All over the district these months are tremendously busy, as the winter grains (wheat and barley) are being sown, to be harvested in April—such is the climate of Irāq—the irrigation channels for the rice lands are all being cleared up, small flood banks strengthened, new reed-huts built, and hundreds of thousands of bundles of reeds cut in the swamps for the great mat-making industry and for building dams, etc. In addition, the threshing and winnowing of the rice crop harvested in late October and early November is not yet finished—all done by hand, so to speak, for the threshing is done by teams of oxen 'treading out the corn,' while, for some inexplicable reason, the lambing season is in full swing, and the calves are still unweaned! It is indeed an astonishing country and capable of the most astonishing developments; and I am feeling at present that I can really do something to help it on and to benefit its people.

But another side of the problem of administration is given in a letter to Major Cumberbatch, December 15:

. . . Any idea of an Arab State is simply blood-stained fooling at present, and this country cannot be handled without some sort of an army in the background. . . . The delays of the Peace Conference, and the well-intentioned self-determinators who know no facts, no Islamic doctrine, and no ethnology, have the lives of several British officers to answer for already, and they will go on adding to the list, I'm afraid. Anyway, down here all is peace and quiet, and I believe we are not actively hated on the whole. The country people are mostly non-political, and the good harvest means more to them than any talk of Arab Government. . . .



CHRISTMAS LAMBS, MUHANNAWIYAH.



RICE HARVEST, 'AGAR.

(Major Norbury wearing Topee : Col. Howell and Hajji Juwad on horseback talking.)



To his mother—

Umm al Ba'rur, December 15.— . . . I had a flying visit (to lunch) from the Najaf doctor to-day, bringing the joyful news that in less than a week I am to be provided with a whole-time native dispenser complete with drugs, supplemented by bi-weekly visits from the Indian doctor of Abu Sukhair. My people have been crying out for this for a long time, and I have been agitating too, and at last it has matured. The man himself is an Arab, which is a blessing, for the prejudice of the locals against doctors is very great indeed. . . . This man, of course, can only tackle fevers, sores, stomachs, and such simple matters, but his mere existence here will do good, and my Jewish community, more enlightened than their Arab neighbours, will certainly use him fully.

I had a funny visitor two nights ago, as I was just sitting down to dinner by myself—a boy whose race I could not at first determine, but speaking excellent English and dressed in British uniform. He was a C.I.D. man, sent from Baghdad on an important murder just perpetrated in Najaf, and had tracked down two men very cleverly to a tribe of mine, arrested them, and brought them for the night to my gaol. He had been riding all day with one of my sheikhs, the head of this tribe, and had had nothing to eat, nor any kit at all. I offered him half my plentiful dinner, which he absolutely refused, and I then felt sure he must be a Jew. (I get very clear glimpses of the fatuity of the 'religious' part of all religions—from which emphatically I do not except any Christian Church except the Quakers, who have none—in my encounters with Jews and Muslims.) So he ate soup and poached eggs, while I meditated idly on the spectacle of a highly-educated, clever young detective, obviously hungry but unable to eat my good dinner—partridge, too—of my servant, utterly damned in the eyes of his fellows because of my morning bacon, and of the absolute parallels to these fatuous religious inhibitions which you find in some of the best people at home. . . . He turned out to be a Baghdad Jew, who entered our service as a clerk and was put on detective work because of his very considerable brains. . . . Most of his time is spent in watching 'seditious' meetings, etc., and he told me a lot about the sort of things

that Baghdad and other people say of our administration ; which ordinarily it's extraordinarily difficult to get at. One knows, of course, in a general way that the man who comes into the office and asks for something with his mouth full of honeyed words of devotion and filial duty to the 'most excellent and glorious British Government,' the moment he gets outside the door says 'How long, O Lord, when shall we be delivered from the hand of these "Kufar" (infidels) ?' But it's lightly come and lightly go ; words don't mean much in this verbose country. This Jew-boy was interesting in his frankness about our Government : he said that, though a Jew, he was still an Arab (a nationalist, that is), but he served the British Government because he knew, as everyone else did, that an Arab Government was a ludicrous impossibility. . . .

. . . To-day I have got well into my annual report [on his district]. It's going to be quite interesting, and I should like to send you a copy, but mustn't—however, you may see it some day. I find my district has brought in over £80,000 revenue for the year, and, if I can double this next year it won't be so bad. . . .

I have a big scheme in hand here too, namely the transformation of a big Government grain store built last year, and now not needed, into a municipal customs office where all goods entering the town must first be brought to pay their market dues. This is mainly Daud's scheme, as he runs municipal affairs very largely : and the idea is very sound, as it gives us such a hold on supplies. We have made a start by selecting four wholesale agents, known as *elwachis*, who act as the go-between from cultivator to retailer, and allotting to each one a shop in the granary. We are also keeping four shops for municipal offices, leaving twenty-eight besides, which we are letting through a sub-lessee. In addition we are issuing a proclamation that all slaughter-cattle, grain and vegetables must be brought first to the place to be taxed before being dispersed to the existing shops. The effect of this will be to make the place appeal to any progressive merchant as an obvious market centre : and I believe that in a very short time we shall have a flourishing show going there. As the building is on the river front, we can, if necessary, make a good wharf for it, the water being deep there : trade is good,

my countryside is, in a quiet way, booming, as the price of rice is high ; so altogether I'm expecting a lot of Umm al Ba'rur. . . .

To his mother—

Umm al Ba'rur, December 22.—I went off on Friday morning on horseback to Ghammas, a ride of about eighteen miles, . . . and started in at once with the hearing of a famous land dispute. . . . The bare outline is as follows: The land in dispute is about 1500 acres, and thirty years ago it belonged to a great tribe called the Khazail, who took no notice of the Turkish Government, and did not pay any taxes. In 1889 the Turks decided to do something, so they sold the land, with an enormous amount besides—probably 30,000 acres in all—for a nominal sum to a rich man called Saiyid Hasan who stood well with them, on his promising to pay the necessary taxes. The whole business was accompanied by amazing bribery and fraud, and the deeds of sale are so fatuous as to be entirely invalid. But the Turks provided troops to push out the tribes, and Saiyid Hasan managed to get possession and cultivate a great part of the land. Of the particular piece now under dispute, however, he never got possession, and the Khazail people remained in occupation.

Saiyid Hasan in due time died, and in 1904 his son, Saiyid Mohsin Abu Tabikh, inherited the property. He was a bit of a soldier and a grasping young man, and could not endure the presence of these tribesmen on land for which he held his father's deeds. He twice obtained Turkish troops to drive them out, and was once successful, so that in 1910 he managed to grow some crops on the land. But back they came, and there they have stayed until this day. In 1918 Saiyid Mohsin petitioned the British to reinstate him, and the A.P.O. of those days (since deceased) rather unfortunately took his deed at its face value, and ordered possession to be given him. The order was not completely carried out, and there has been constant trouble: and a few months ago suspicions were raised about the validity of the deeds (which are of course in Turkish), and they were sent to Baghdad for investigation. Needless to say, they were pronounced wholly worthless.

My business then was to investigate the question of who had been in possession these thirty years, and to form an opinion on the case, as this had never been done, my predecessors having concentrated solely on the documents: and the result of my investigations was the story I have baldly given above. When I had finished and informed them that I was instructed to submit the matter to Najaf for judgment, a dramatic development occurred. Saiyid Mohsin had called as evidence on his side two very interesting and attractive people, sheikhs of the Khazail, who were once very great warriors and the terror of the Turks. Now one of Mohsin's many wives is also a Khazail woman. But the other party's father, now dead, was in his day (forty years ago) the biggest of all the sheikhs of the Khazail. Well, these two sheikhs, whom Mohsin had called, at the request of the other party, went after my hearing to Mohsin and asked him to accept their arbitration, which he eventually did. They propose to divide the land into two equal shares, give half to each party, and themselves lay out the boundaries. I think we shall probably accept their offer with thanks, and thus end a thirty years' war.

This is only a skeleton account, and I can't reproduce the dramatic aspect of it all, nor give you any impression of the individualities, these desert sheikhs of Khazail, with their fighting and plundering past, contrasted with the self-righteous rich non-tribal landlord Saiyid Mohsin.

Next day we held a meeting to arrange plans for my great scheme to improve the site of Ghammas. . . . We had sixty or seventy people, mostly sheikhs of various tribes, the leading townspeople and of course Saiyid Mohsin, who is the great landlord and nominally owns the whole place. We took written agreements from five different sets of people—(1) Saiyid Mohsin himself, by which he undertakes to fill up certain specified areas (on which he wishes to retain tenant's rights) entirely at his own expense: (2) from representatives of three rice-growing tribes, to forward 15,000 bundles of rice-straw: (3) from about a dozen reed-owners to cut and stack on the river banks 100,000 bundles of reeds: (4) from two desert tribes to forward 100 donkeys: (5) from

the townspeople to look after the donkeys, find labour to dig the earth, load, drive, and unload the donkeys (all the earth having to be brought from outside the municipal area, half a mile or so), and to fetch the reeds from up the river. The reeds and straw are to be laid in the water, as a mattress for the earth.

Everybody protested loudly, and said that I was asking too much, but 'of course they would obey the orders of the Government.' I shan't expect for a minute that we shall get all these quantities, but I believe we shall get something achieved, and, if only it is a good show, I shall then ask for, and probably get, £5000 or so to complete the good work, and turn what is now a stinking muck-heap into a thriving town. It is an immensely important place, and a great tribal centre, with much commerce, the market place of many hundreds, and indeed thousands, of desert people, who come in from distances of forty or fifty miles. Anyway I've done my best, and we shall see! I opened the meeting by a little speech in Arabic, then Daud did the details, and then I closed with a solemn warning in Arabic to the effect that, if they didn't all play up and do what we had ordered properly, and the Government had to take it all in hand again from the start, the result to them would be much greater trouble and expense. . . .

The work is to begin on New Year's Day, and to be completed in three weeks: and I have asked the Major [Norbury] to lend me Sergeant Fear,¹ about whom you already know, to act as chief engineer, foreman of works, etc., etc.

Yesterday I rode back here, and to-day I have been tackling another great scheme [the market and local Custom House]. . . . We held a meeting of shopkeepers, wholesale and retail, to find out what their views are. It is difficult to introduce a change of this sort without somewhat upsetting the balance of business. . . . We have now settled on an experimental arrangement which I hope may be a success: it inclines on the whole in favour of the purchasing public and of the small producer somewhat at the expense of the shopkeeper. I have a strong suspicion

¹ Sergeant Fear, Somersets: knew Captain F. Baines, and gave him first aid when wounded.

that the latter has been profiteering lately pretty extensively, like his brothers elsewhere, but I suppose middlemen are an inevitable feature of any progressive community, and one doesn't want to ruin them. . . . It is clear that the producers (consisting mainly of women who bring in a cloak full of rice or barley, or a donkey-load of vegetables, or a dozen fowls, or what not) are frightfully pleased at being delivered from the clutches of the middleman.

[But I must say (he writes to Lady Mary Murray, December 25) that I was not thinking of such buyers or sellers, but only of Government control for my municipality.]

Well, it's awfully interesting: only one's ignorance is so colossal. One thing at all events is becoming clear in this district as the result of my two months of travelling, holding mejlisses, ordering public works, and generally interfering with the self-centred exclusiveness of tribes and individuals, and that is that however many blunders I've made (and some of them are big ones), still, everybody knows there's a Government in the country now, and the sooner they look alive and pull themselves together, the better! And I believe on the whole they like it! But I can't pretend that my procedure is highly democratic, unless we spiritualise to a very high degree of evanescence the theory of the General Will. Not that I do anything except occasionally to utter vague and sonorous threats.

To Lady Mary Murray—

Umm al Ba'rur, December 23.— . . . I have spent the eighty-four days since October 1 as follows: On tour forty-seven, in office thirty-five, days off (i.e. no work at all) two. Anyway I've got what I asked for, a hard life and a strange one.

In this letter he encloses 'a literal translation of a petition put before me this week and my own local official's report upon it: for it brings one sharply back to a life like that of Burnt Njal or even Homer, and may perhaps amuse Mr. Murray!'

PETITION AND THE INVESTIGATION

1. *The Petition.*

I the petitioner, a soldier serving in the militia, had an uncle who was murdered; and the murderers were of the Saraidat, Bani Aridh, a section of Bani Hasan: and when my uncle was killed there were killed along with him a number of people. For all of them a blood-fine (fasl) was fixed; and the blood-fine for my uncle consisted of a woman, Sattam's daughter, whom they betrothed to my father (as next-of-kin); but she stayed with her family, being then only a little girl. Now they have gone and married her to someone else, although she was duly betrothed to my father.

Now, therefore, I beg of the mercy of the government, seeing they have given her in marriage elsewhere, that you would make an order to give us another woman instead of her, or else money in lieu, and not let us be deprived of our rights.

2. *Report of the Local Official on being asked to investigate.*

At the investigation it transpired that about thirty-five or forty years ago a man of Lafta's tribe (al Saraidat) stole a woman from the Bani Aridh, whereupon there broke out a great slaughtering between the two tribes. The petitioner's uncle was one of those members of Lafta's tribe who were killed. After an end had been made of the killing, they agreed on both sides to pay the blood-fines, on condition that the first payment be made by Bani Aridh, after which Lafta would proceed to pay. A portion of the blood-fine was to be paid over in the form of women. In short the petitioner's father was particularised as one of those who was to be given one woman.

Lafta, however, never carried out his agreement or paid for the slaughter according to the agreement made between the two tribes, so the settlement became null and void from that day to this, and so matters have remained for both parties ever since.

NOTE.—The above is as accurate a rendering as possible, but the original is extraordinarily funny, owing to the use of odd expressions.

The girl in question was about nine years old at the

time, so she's now somewhere towards the fifties. Perhaps this is why the petitioner wants some one new!

Lafta is a sheikh of mine, and a troublesome one, but fortunately his warrior days are over, and he's rather troubled by rheumatism. He's an unpleasant old scoundrel.

P.S.—I should add that I did not grant the request of the petitioner!

He had intended to go to Najaf for Christmas, but on December 22 he received a telegram announcing that Major Norbury was coming to camp in his district on Christmas Eve. 'There will be five of us, and it will be great fun: and I am looking forward to a little holiday. Probably I shall stay two days there—we shall go out shooting duck up on the haurs (lakes), shall entertain some sheikhs, get some games of bridge, and be thoroughly lazy and sociable.'

He writes after it:

To his mother—

Umm al Ba'rur, December 28.—I'm back again in my little house after a most pleasant Christmas holiday. I got up to Mohannawiyah about noon on the 24th to find the camp already pitched, but none of the others arrived. [As they had not come at dusk he accepted the Sheikh Abadi's invitation to dine with him in the madhif.] It was an original sort of Christmas Eve, with a great log burning in the middle of the floor, and much coffee and bountiful quantities of food; and there was, too, much more general conversation than usual, thanks to the presence of Abadi's brother-in-law, an educated and interesting man, who was for a time in our service . . . the first man I have met in the country who knows about the war, and Europe and politics generally. I told them of our Christmas customs—stockings in particular, and they were much amused; and I heard a great deal about Turkish practices, etc., which was fascinating to listen to. This brother-in-law, named Majid, speaks educated Arabic and it is a pleasure to listen to him, besides being much more intelligible.

On Christmas morning the Major, Wigan, and Hopkins





TABAR 'ABD AS SADAH, WITH MADHIF OF SHILTAGH.
(Launches loading up after camp.)



A GROUP OF THE 'AWABID.
(Sheikh Marzuq in centre, just behind white horse : Major Norbury
on right reading a map.)

appeared about 11 A.M., their transport having broken down the previous day. We had a very good lunch with Abadi, and afterwards rode round to look at duck and snipe shooting ground. In the evening we had a magnificent dinner, in which the Major's cook surpassed himself—no turkey, but a flaming plum pudding, and the first potatoes I had touched since leaving the ship at Basrah. After dinner we had in the servants, pulled crackers with them and made them wear caps; and the cook (a Goanese) made a fragmentary and ludicrous English speech!

Next day . . . Wigan and I went up in my launch to a point about 15 miles up, where the Hillah road crosses my river, to meet—whom do you think? Miss Bell! It was such a delight. I'd had no idea she was coming, and I had been longing to see her again. She duly arrived about 3.30 in a car from Hillah; we embarked her, with servant and kit, and down we came back to camp, arriving just at dusk. She was in great form and talked the whole time, full of the most interesting information, for she knows, of course, all the secrets from Constantinople to Afghanistan, and has just come two months ago from Egypt, through Beyrout, Aleppo, Damascus and Mosul, seeing the working of the Arab State of Feisal, the French, etc. She has the most amazing detailed knowledge of this country, and could talk about everyone of my sheikhs as an old friend and remember their names! It gives quite a new direction to one's views on one's own individual problems to hear her talking about the big general questions of Baghdad, etc. ! . . .

Next day . . . we all foregathered in Abadi's madhif for a great meal. Miss Bell talks to the people all the time, and they love it. . . . Afterwards she asked Abadi if she might call on the hareem (six wives of his) and he assented, rather reluctantly as we thought; but apparently they were very shy, and it was dull. We dined in our own camp, and this morning the party broke up. . . .

I came back against a tremendous south wind which made my river quite rough, so that spray was flying all over the launch! The rain must come soon, and the people want it badly. It was a blessing to find all serene here and going well: no crime or complaints, and work

really being done. Two very nice sets of wooden steps have been built down to the water's edge on the river front, in place of the horrible muddy earth slide which has been 'good enough' for some thousands of years. . . . And the business about the market . . . has produced a lot more congratulations from the public, and the price of food has really gone down extraordinarily. Some of the retailers, of course, are pretty disgruntled, but I don't fancy they'll starve. . . .

To Miss A. M. Routh—

Umm al Ba'rur, January 3, 1920.— . . . As for the weather, it is now almost perfect, but a little cold at night and early morning. The days are extraordinarily bright and cloudless, with brilliant sunshine and a nip in the air. I ride all day in full winter clothes with a leather waistcoat, but I must admit that on tour my tent becomes jolly cold about 6 P.M.

Our twilight lasts very much as in England, with of course the most amazingly beautiful sunsets and afterglows. My district is full of birds: at present the swampy places—a string of 'Broads' about forty miles long between the cultivated strip bordering the river and the desert beyond—are simply covered with colossal flocks of wild duck, with some geese, and innumerable other waterfowl, also snipe and some quail. Of English birds otherwise I only know of sparrows, rooks, partridges and kingfishers, though we have a crested lark not unlike his English brother. I have also, of course, vultures and hawks, a few heron, and sometimes storks—that is all I can think of at present. Incomparably the loveliest is the kingfisher, more like a jewel than a bird: but the noise of the flocks of duck and the whirr of partridges give me intense pleasure, and sound in a way extraordinarily homelike. I need hardly say that there is any amount of first-class shooting for those that like it—I don't, and it is just as well, as I've no time whatever to give to it.

As for flowers, they exist only in the spring; such fragile things can't stand our summer heat. Most of the fruit, too, comes in May and June, and was over before my arrival—only figs and pomegranates are more or less perennial. We got some delicious oranges the other day

from Ba'kubah near Baghdad, but they are rare down here. Dates are eaten all the year round, and very good they are, but they mostly don't agree with Englishmen, and I am no exception to the rule.

To his father—

Abu Shora, January 4.— . . . I was amused by your remarks about my choice lot of scoundrels. . . . Kipling's line about East of Suez, 'where there ain't no Ten Commandments,' is extremely apt, and not, as I always thought, a doggerel trick. My servant claims to have killed seven men, and he is the most peaceable, harmless, and domesticated creature you could find; and as for the animal vices, they are the outcome of a crude warlike state of society, in which the natural result of battle is that the victor seizes the women and enslaves the children of the vanquished, and not of any deep degradation at all. The only place where vice is beastly and intolerable is Najaf, because it is combined there with the quintessence of Pharisaism and a blasphemous parody of holiness, and that I must say I can't stand. But my jolly people are just children of Nature, and remarkably attractive, cultivated (though entirely uneducated), and well-mannered people they are, while their hospitality is of course overwhelming.

No, of course their hands are not clean, though water is poured over them before eating, but, as their plates and cups and spoons are always filthy, and as for their methods of eating the less said the better, it is silly to worry about such things. . . . To be hygienic here one would have to keep an English servant and simply surround oneself with a ring fence against their hospitality. . . .

I was awfully interested in *The Times* articles about Mesopotamia. . . . Personally, I don't feel as pessimistic as that writer, and would dispute many of his facts. But none of us know really what our people think or want; indeed they don't know themselves, while the towns, particularly Baghdad, with their mass of disgruntled ex-Turkish employees, malcontents and emissaries from Syria, echoes from Kurdistan, Central Arabia, and the Russian Bolsheviks, not to mention Persia and Afghanistan, are a pretty problem which may at any time call a tune for

which my very non-political country sheikhs may in the long run have to pay the piper. . . .

[Miss Bell and Captain Wigan had paid him a visit at Umm al Ba'rur on December 30.] She had spent a night there two years ago, and had met some of my people, and she paid a lot of visits, and everyone was fearfully delighted. . . .

. . . I spent the night of January 2 with a famous and delightful old warrior called Lafta Shamkhi, and his hospitality was even pleasanter than usual, being much less formal and like the desert style. He has a most delightful little son of about four, who took a great fancy to me, and was introduced to me as 'Uncle,' the familiar term of intimacy between inferiors and superiors.

. . . I scored a great success on New Year's Day, though I hesitate to tell you about it for fear you will think it's always happening. I was riding a borrowed horse, a very fast and jolly little Arab, and was just letting it out to gallop, when the path suddenly came to a little shallow ditch. At this the horse shied and threw me: but my right leg caught in the stirrup and I was dragged about thirty yards before my boot broke, and off went the horse. I wasn't the least hurt or even bruised, but it was a remarkable escape: I was able to ride on and finish the job and wasn't even stiff next morning! My companions, seven or eight Arabs, dashed up thinking I was killed, and said incredulously 'Aren't you dead?' and could hardly believe that no bones were broken. They thought quite literally that it was a special interposition from Ullah, and kept breaking out into pious exclamations all the way home; which was embarrassing. . . .

Six weeks later, he tells of a comment on this riding accident—'a very near thing and a lucky escape.'

To Mr. F. F. Urquhart—

February 14.—Yesterday [his companions on that occasion, who were again riding with him] some queer people whom it would take too long (and be impossible) to describe or explain . . . were all praising me and saying what a wonderful fellow I was, and how I had only to order them to cut their throats and

they would do it with a smile, etc., etc. (which is how they do talk), when one of them chipped in and said, 'Yes, it's quite true: the hākīm is a wonderful man: on that day when he fell off his horse and was unhurt I knew that he was under the special protection of Allah'; and then they all galloped round and did wonderful things with their horses, pretending to stick spears into one another, to show how pleased they were!

To Mr. Cyril Bailey—

January 4.—[Referring to the Oxford Boys' Club.] As you know, I personally long with all my heart to see the old place under a permanency, whatever may be the future as regards the supply of fit persons. . . .

. . . Your mention of the B minor makes me catch my breath and almost wish I were back in Oxford again: and, if you saw my present life, you would understand what a lot that means. I shan't forget the last time that work was sung in Oxford very easily; how after it we went up to my rooms and Arthur Adam was quite literally in a state of spiritual intoxication. The 'Sea Symphony' often rings in my ears, particularly when I am galloping over desert, a sensation which has more than a few points of resemblance to parts of the scherzo: and the humanity of my people here is in some ways much more Whitmanesque than anything I had met before, unless it be in certain aspects of the British soldier under fire.

To his mother—

January 9.— . . . My pet scheme at Ghammas looks like being a tremendous success, after having been perilously near a failure. I think I told you that work was to start on New Year's Day, and most fortunately I decided at the last minute to send Daud there on December 31, as I could not go myself. When he arrived little or nothing had been done, but when they saw him on the spot they realised that the Government meant business, and things began to hum, with the result that when I got there on the 5th something like a quarter of the noisome stagnant pools had entirely vanished, and the place was simply full of activity, excitement, and hope. There had of course been difficulties—the reed cutters had been trying to pass

off on us minute bundles instead of the customary size, and so also the owners of straw ; but this was got over, and when I left on the 7th it was estimated that we had received about 12,000 bundles of straw and over 15,000 of reeds. All the hundred donkeys had appeared, but they were the small-size ones kept by the desert tribes, not the big load-carrying kind, and so the amount of earth they can move at each journey is not enormous ; still, as I say, the result appeared to me perfectly marvellous. I have some amusing photographs of it—if they are a success. The best part was that the townspeople about whom I was least confident (because, being independent and under no sheikh, they are quite irresponsible and very difficult to hold to their bond) on seeing that we really meant business and that the tribes had come up to the mark with materials, fell to with a will, and realised that their interests were indeed being furthered, and, what I particularly looked for, expressed a real desire to build proper houses instead of their present miserable reed huts. At the same time, on January 1 we changed most of the municipal staff, and found that the town had long been groaning under a thoroughly corrupt set of officials. Arabs are like that, and will never formulate charges against officials, so it's only when you've sacked them that you find out whether you've done right or not. In this case, too, we found that the local ferryman had been charging a penny a time instead of his legal fare of a halfpenny ; so when we put this right, the people, instead of taking it as their due, were most profusely grateful, and thought this an instance of the mercy of the Government, instead of lynching the ferryman, as they should have done. I am going down again to Ghammas on about the 19th or 20th, when I hope to see the first stage of the job, that of eliminating all the foul water, ditches, and drains properly completed. The next stage is to spend about 2000 rupees of municipal funds on putting down 40,000 big donkey-loads of earth on the new streets which I propose to lay out : we shall have to hire 100 donkeys or so from Kufa, and can get them at the rate of five rupees per hundred loads. That being done, I hope to issue a proclamation offering building rights to anyone who wishes to build in brick, provided the site is brought up

to the level of the new roads and approved by me. In a year's time I hope to have no end of a town in place of the present chaotic farmyard: and all of it for 2000 rupees of public money. I estimate the cost of the present work to the tribes and the townspeople very roughly as a minimum at:

	Rs.
15,000 bundles of straw . . .	750
Cost of river transport for these . .	250
100,000 bundles of reeds . . .	5,000
River transport @ Rs.25 per thousand . . .	2,500
100 donkeys for three weeks . . .	300
200 labourers for three weeks . . .	2,500

Rs.11,300 or about £1,200.

But I need hardly say that, if the whole cost were paid by Government, or by a contractor, it would be at least 20,000 rupees, and probably much more. So it's a fine performance on the part of the public. Apart from the above figures, the great Ghammas landlord, Saiyid Mohsin Abu Tabikh, is doing at his own expense his own share of the town, amounting to about one-sixth of the whole: so it is costing him probably another £200 or so, which must be added to the total.

To-day being a Friday, I took a holiday from the office, and went riding with Daud to see a nice little sheikh who lives only about four miles away or less. We arrived at about 11.30 and sat in the madhīf till 3, when the food appeared. . . . Just as we were finishing, one of the cats which haunt the madhīf dashed in and seized a whole roast chicken and got away with it to the far end of the room; but just as she was getting her teeth into it a large dog appeared, contemptuously seized it from her, and proceeded to devour it at his pleasure. No one was in the least perturbed, which shows the cheapness of roast fowl. . . .

I have been hearing some curious bits of tribal custom lately. . . . If a man kills anything, e.g. another man, or a horse or dog, or dishonours a woman, he is liable for a variable amount of blood-money (*fasl*), which need not be paid in cash necessarily, assessed by a meeting of the

wise men of the tribes concerned. A reasonable fasl for a man is about £25, whereas for a horse it is more like £100 at present prices. But the oddest fasl is that for a dog. Dogs, for Muslims, like pigs, are 'nejis'—unclean, and if you touch one you must go through ceremonial washings. But Arabs, besides being Muslims, are tent-dwellers, and to such a good watch-dog is worth ten pistols or twenty watchmen : which is the reason why the whole country is made hideous at night by the barking of countless dogs. The fasl for a dog is as follows. The owner holds the dead body by the tail so that the tip of the nose just touches the ground ; then millet seed is poured on the animal until the injured owner says stop : which he need not do until the body is completely buried. Millet is chosen because, being circular, it runs out like water, and consequently a very large amount is needed to cover a dog from nose to tail : indeed, the fasl in cash may often work out at more than the fasl of a man.

Marriage is full of incredibly funny customs, though for the women they must have a pretty beastly side. Every sheikh is anxious to marry his sons when they reach the age of about 15 in order to keep them out of mischief. He starts making inquiries about the right sort of families, and, having heard of a likely girl, sends a woman of his household to have a look at her and report ; he is, of course, not allowed to see her himself, nor is the bridegroom. This trusty emissary judges mainly on personal beauty, though I believe from some things one hears that the art of cookery has a bearing on some selections : if her report is favourable, the boy's father pays a ceremonious call on the girl's father, and negotiates as to what he shall pay for the girl. The sum of money is fixed, so I am told, wholly on the girl's beauty ; rank and other attractions have little financial value. This delicate matter having been settled, the marriage festival is arranged, the girl is handed over, and the parties meet as husband and wife. As a saving clause, however, the husband can divorce his wife the next day if he finds he has been given a girl that he doesn't approve of : but no doubt the father has something to say to this, as the money has come from his pocket. It is only fair to the Prophet to add that women, too, have some rights, and can divorce their

husbands, though not for mere ugliness. This first wife, the father's selection, keeps the boy going for a time, and her successors, normally in the case of a rich man at least five or six, are his own selections (though of course he mayn't see them till he has married them), and he himself has to pay their fathers the necessary price. A reasonable figure for a girl of decent family seems to be about £10—women are apparently cheap and plentiful.

I have put down my name for the Arabic Proficiency Exam. in Baghdad on January 29. . . . But for the examination I feel sure I should never tear myself away from the engrossing work of the District. I've got such a nice wood fire to sit by in my little room !

To Mrs. Cumberbatch—

Umm al Ba'rur, January 14.—I forget when it was I last wrote ; and I know I haven't heard from you for some time. But I must write to-night to some one to whom I can talk, not because of any particularly startling news, but just like that—wanting to talk. I haven't seen an Englishman for over a fortnight, which is too long ; my excellent Daud is with me, and he has come in here nearly every day lately to read Arabic with me, and been in all ways most invaluable, and I have become very much attached to him : but, although otherwise entirely European, he shares one quality with all the Arabs who surround me, that he never lets me forget I am the Hākim. It is, as Sancho Panza discovered, awful hard work being a 'Hākim' ; and though it has high complementary pleasures, as when one really does get something settled and done, it also is apt to bring with it moments when the accumulation of responsibilities, which at other times are seen in their true perspective as being all in the day's work, become just a little nightmarish in the way they play upon the mind. If I gave you a list of the work I have to do, and be responsible for, between now and the end of the month, when I hope to take four blissful days of complete irresponsibility in Baghdad (but Heaven knows whether or no this will be possible), it wouldn't really sound very formidable. To-morrow I have to go over a piece of land with two important sheikhs who don't love one another at all ; having no technical knowledge

whatever of the irrigation problem involved, I have to make a decision on what digging is necessary to put the maximum of land under cultivation, embody it in a written agreement, and make them sign,—no difficulty really in this, because ultimately they'll do what they're told, but a delicate matter. Next day I go to Najaf for a night, and the following day bring back with me my boss for three or four days' tour seeing all the works that have been done in the district during the last two months; they are really very fine and well worth seeing, and I shall immensely enjoy having him here. . . . Then after that three or four really puzzling questions; a land dispute between a rich and holy family on the one side and about 2000 wild Beduw on the other—no facts, no documents, and lots of bad blood: some visits to some nasty people who want a lot of diplomacy and some hard hitting: and two or three big and complicated irrigation questions, involving the cultivation of perhaps 15,000 acres of land and a lot of very bad tempers.

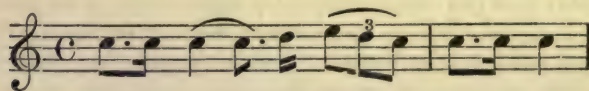
Meanwhile here are one or two problems of the office: the sending of about £20,000, nearly half of it in silver (and very bulky are rupees I may tell you) to the Treasury at Kufa twenty miles away—a very slight matter this, but one breathes more freely when it's over. Then four thieves are to be tried—three for stealing a horse and one for stealing sheep—no evidence worth the name, all of them admittedly professional thieves, and the devil knows what to do with them.

When little matters like these begin to worry one unduly it is clear that one wants a little society. Up till a week ago I had been so overwhelmingly busy rushing about from one place to another and almost continuously on tour that I simply had no time except to work, eat, and sleep. But I have now been in my own house for seven days continuously: office work has slacked off a bit, and I have sat by the fire in the evenings and read books and written letters, and to some extent recreated a life which, pleasant in itself and in its memories, allows for more destructive criticism of both one's own and other people's characters, attainments, and ideals, than is altogether wise in a life where you gamble every day from morning to night with (quite honestly) no real permanent assets except

a clear conscience ; the paper money with which one plays is, of course, the name of Great Britain—good money of its kind, but apt to suffer slight fluctuations in the exchange of the Islamic world.

I will try to describe to you the sheikh with whom I lunched yesterday, and you will draw your own conclusions. He is one of the five leaders of a tribe called the Khazail, which fifty years ago ruled all this part of Irāq. The Turks for a long time could do nothing with them, but gradually they made some headway ; and for twenty years before the war the Khazail had declined a little. Not very much, however : they took tribute from all the rice-growing tribes along the river, rode out every spring on their raiding expeditions (ghazu), and paid the Turks what taxes they thought fit : and, though this man's father was exiled to Anatolia by the Turks, their spirit was never broken, and to this day their names are the most respected in all this part of Irāq. They were of course pure robber chiefs, not caring for such woman's work as cultivation or merchandise : what they got by war they took, putting in tribute-payers to work the land, and living themselves in a fine free style with a troop of 500 horse to go where they would, all fed and enriched on the spoil of the river people.

Of the five sheikhs of this tribe, who for the last twenty-five years at least had been the lords of the lower Euphrates, I have three in my District, and if you have read the above account with understanding, i.e. forgetting about Socialism and the emancipation of women (the Khazail of course always took their fill of the pretty daughters of their beaten foes) and recreating for a moment the custom called up by that trumpet entry in Scheherezade—how does it go ?—



and trenchant, they tell lies like the Irish—art for art's sake; they are temperamentally, I think, pro-British, because they always respect military strength.

Unfortunately, from being the cynosure of all eyes, the receivers of gifts of money, grain, women, and honour from all men, they are now poorer than any church mouse. They never took the trouble to seize for themselves good rice land; it was more profitable to take tribute from those who were more industrious and less warlike: now their lands are almost valueless. Unfortunately in the scheme of things considered politically sound by the British Government there is no scope for super-robbers, and it would be a rather difficult precedent to make them an allowance as compensation for unemployment due to a change of government. I am thinking of making them all three judges, or alternatively Colonels, but there are certain difficulties—though they would fill either post most magnificently. One of the greatest difficulties is also one of the silliest, that one couldn't offer them the salary of even the best paid official here if one wanted to restore them their former position: for a sheikh lives for his tribe, and to keep open house and keep up the traditions of Arab hospitality must cost the equivalent of at least £3000 to £4000 a year.

Well, the matter on which I had to go riding with this man—his name is Salman al Abtān—was a quarrel with a neighbour about the water supply of some of his crops: a twopenny-halfpenny business which only served to drive home how horribly poor he really is. We rode all round and I made a sort of forcible settlement which gave him what he wanted more or less, and then we returned to a meal in his tent, for he is too poor to build a house. He was wearing a handsome sword—quite illegally, but as he was once so great I hadn't the heart to tell him not to, and I got him talking about the old days. He told me with great joy of a battle he fought against a tribe living fifteen miles off called the Fatlah, rich rice-growing people, in which 120 of them were killed and only twenty-five of his men (the usual official communiqué this): and then described how some notable Saiyids (holy men, reputed descendants of Ali the Prophet of God)—one of whom I know well—came on the scene and stopped the carnage and allotted the blood-fine, £T.700 and three horses to be

given to the Khazail : and as Salman himself was wounded, the parcel of ground where his blood fell was given him to be an inheritance for ever ! Into this inheritance he never entered, for the Great War supervened almost at once ; so I am now going to make a great effort to put him in possession of it, and thus fitly bring the story to a close.

We talked a lot about raiding, and he told me stories of it and said jokingly how much he'd like me to give him just five days' leave to go out for one more raid. Nobody would be hurt, well perhaps one would be killed and two wounded, but after all what's that ? The talk veered to legal documents and deeds, and he told me how one of his people took some land once, and when someone urged him to take out a written deed from the Turks defining his new boundaries he drew his sword and said ' My sword is my boundary, and I don't want a better one.' ' Yes, that's it,' said Salman, ' a sword is the thing and no nonsense about writings ; they're all right for governments and such, but we didn't worry in those days.' I said I didn't wonder he wanted those days back, and he rather thoughtfully replied, ' What's the good of talking about the past ; it is gone : and I expect peace and law and order are good things really, only I used to be so rich and now I have to sell a horse to buy rice, and can't find 100 rupees to pay an old debt.'

Frankness like this is rare among my people, and it belongs essentially to the desert atmosphere, not to the valley peoples, who don't love ' those Arabs, those Beduw ' as they scornfully call them. It is awfully wonderful really that one can ride all day with all these discordant elements about one absolutely unarmed and unguarded, can sleep alone in safety in one's house at night without a sentry, and can carry on and get every order obeyed, with a total force at my disposal of six thoroughly unreliable and badly trained Arab militiamen. The name British goes a surprisingly long way, as one learns when one is tossed out on to such a world as this. But I don't feel that it's wise always to be making drafts on it, and for this reason Solomon's prayer for wisdom seems not amiss.

To his father—

Najaf, January 17.— . . . Last Sunday night I dined with Azra, and he gave us quite the best dinner I

have had in Irāq outside the Najaf mess. . . . Before dinner three tiny little girls, sisters of his new daughter-in-law, came in and very shyly said 'How do you do' and when they went out 'Good night' in English; and afterwards we heard them in the next room singing 'God save the King!' They were dressed just as English children, and were complete with hats: they come from Hillah, where there is a proper school, and are learning English. Being with Jews one realises very sharply how incredibly backward the Arab is; and it is really pleasant to talk to people who, quite indubitably, are solidly delighted to see the British Government, and want nothing but its continuance.

After dinner he and his sons told us endless stories of Turkish times and the way in which Jews and Christians suffered as compared with Muslims. The marvel is how they ever managed to become rich, but somehow they did, and at the moment I suppose Azra's capital may be £20,000 or more.

. . . [My servant told me] . . . that up till three years ago he was a Turkish cavalryman (which I knew before), but that a little before our occupation he had a quarrel with eight Turkish police, in the course of which he killed two and threw them into the river. They were trying to rob him at the time. He was caught, taken to Baghdad, and sentenced to fifteen years' imprisonment; but he'd only done three months when the British arrived, and he, with the remaining occupants of the gaols, streamed out to meet them. He said the worst of it was that when the Turks cleared out they took off with them his five camels and a good mare, which otherwise he could have looked after properly—a loss of £200 or more at present prices. . . .

A change of plans took Saumarez to Baghdad with Major Norbury. The next letter gives details of the journey and visit.

To his mother—

Umm al Ba'rur, January 25.— . . . My most interesting experience in Baghdad was when, on going to see Miss Bell one morning, I found her talking to an 'Agaili camel

driver just up with a caravan from Central Arabia. He was a real desert man with a most wonderful rugged face, and told her all the news of the Sa'ud and Ibn Rashid and the bazaar talk of Nejd, which place he left only six or seven weeks ago. It was perfectly fascinating to listen to, and we both felt we could hardly sit still, but must jump up and go off with him travelling, travelling. Miss Bell went to Nejd early in 1914, and knows many of the people (she's the only Englishwoman who's been there, and precious few men have been, for it means a journey of fifteen to twenty days across the desert); but even I, who knew nothing about them, was thrilled by the man's vivid and incisive talk. . . . I *will* go there some day.

In a letter of the same date to Lady Mary Murray he gives more details, as follows :

He had left Nejd about five weeks before, and come across the desert to Koweit, and thence by ship via Basrah to Baghdad : it was glorious to listen to him talking the bazaar talk of Ibn Sa'ud and Ibn Rashid, how a great stir had been caused when a man said in the market that he had just descended from heaven and was a prophet, and how Ibn Sa'ud just sat and gave his judgments, and nobody took any notice, because 'now we all do as we like,' and so on and so forth—a real rugged desert man with wonderful turns of speech and a deliberate, but incisive power of description and (as all Arabs have) a great power of calling up pictures in picturesque language. When Miss Bell wished him to take back a letter to the Sa'ud, instead of saying 'Delighted,' or words to that effect, he said very solemnly and slowly, 'Upon my head, upon my nose, upon my shoulder, upon my breast,' tapping himself very emphatically as he named each part ! This was the first time I had sat and talked with a real Arabian Arab, though the difference between him and my people was very small indeed, only that his Arabic was purer on the whole.

[He continues to his mother, January 25:] I had a talk with Colonel Wilson. He said I should certainly be

wanted in Baghdad, but he would leave me here till autumn to complete my year, only I was not to get too much attached to my district ! I told him the harm was already done and that I didn't at all desire a transfer, but still there's plenty of time. . . .

I was amused at your mentioning a letter of mine recalling my hope of Christmas 1918 that in a year I might be engaged in some sort of reconstruction. This work that I am doing is more construction than reconstruction, but it's worth doing ; at all events it is, at present, very satisfying work, and one can see some of one's results already. Our whole future in the Islamic world is absolutely uncertain, and it is quite possible that we have already failed too disastrously ever to recover ; but on the other hand, there may be a tremendous future for a really good Middle East policy, in which I think I have quite a chance of finding a good place. Of course, one would like to be reconstructing England ; but, except for some forms of education, I see no niche for me, and I don't want to be a teacher of any sort. At this distance (and seen, I admit, through such very faulty media as the *Times Weekly* and the *Nation*), social improvement seems to me to rest almost entirely on the shoulders of voluntary workers like yourself. I cannot see what one can do for it in a professional capacity, barring of course doing an ordinary profession well, which in itself is social service. But I mean if one takes the Civil Service, or the Bar, or Literature, or Politics, or even the Labour movement, what can one do that is constructive ? Here on the other hand I am constructing the whole time ; and jolly hard work it is.

I got back here to find Daud had taken in hand the naming of the streets of my town, and had named one of them 'Al Hākim Kabtān Mann Street,' so my name may be immortalised in Irāq ! We are fixing up names in English and Arabic. . . . I have got 25,000 rupees to spend on my works in the district entirely at my own discretion, which is a distinct triumph. . . .

Both my servants have announced their intention of coming with me to London when I come home ; I have explained that I couldn't afford it, but this makes no impression whatever on their minds. . . .

To Miss A. M. Routh—

Umm al Ba'rur, January 25.— . . . We are now, according to the Arabic calendar, in the second month of spring, but the country looks autumnal: the willows and poplars are golden, and there is a smell of dry leaves in the air, and in the morning a bitterly cold wind: the days are gloriously bright and the sun very warm, and it is delicious to feel the evenings really growing long.

To his mother—

Ghammas, February 1.—Here I am on tour with the Major, who is inspecting the great works that are going on in the district. . . . Yesterday morning we went round all the improvements in the town, to wit my new market, which has brought down the prices, the strengthening of the river front with four sets of steps down to the water and a better ferry, the building up of the streets, general cleanliness, and finally the great flood bank about $1\frac{1}{2}$ miles long, which goes right round the town and the date gardens behind it. He was very much impressed, and it really is rather a fine sight. Then after lunch we rode down here, arriving very comfortably at sunset, and ate an excellent dinner in the madhif with Saiyid Mohsin, who was in his best and most sanctimonious form. This morning we went all round the great work here, and really it has been very successful. One half of the town is absolutely clear of water and mud, and there are no stinks at all, and work is still going on on the other half. The first ardour has somewhat faded, it is true, and the work is going on somewhat more leisurely; moreover, about half the donkeys have been more or less worked off their feet, and I have had to send them back to their owners for a rest: still, the change is very remarkable, and the public seems really impressed and stirred, which is the great thing. Meanwhile as the result of a reformed municipality, the month's municipal revenue has nearly doubled itself, thanks mainly to Daud's good arrangements.

After we had seen all this, we went down a little way to lunch with a sheikh who lives on a big lake covered with wild duck. There the Major tried a little shooting from a boat, but there was a high wind and he only got one

bird ; but it was a lovely day and great fun. After lunch we went to look at a new dam I had got built to replace one broken last year, and it turned out to be a very fine piece of work. . . . To-morrow morning we go back by launch to Umm al Ba'rur and do a few odd jobs, perhaps calling on a sheikh by the way. Next day we ride out to see some tremendous pieces of digging done to get ready the land for rice, and on Wednesday again much the same programme, but on the other bank of the river, each time lunching in a madhif. . . .

It is very pleasant having the Major with me, and I have a tremendous lot to show him, for he hasn't been here since October, and an immense amount of work has been done in the interval. I was, of course, very lucky in having for practical purposes virgin soil to work on, being the first British Officer in the District, and there was, and still is, a tremendous lot to be done which only needed a certain amount of hard work in order to bring about real and obvious material progress : and we certainly have progressed. The other district, Western Shamiyah, is more or less stationary, not from any fault of the Hākīm, but because it has been fairly well attended to in the past, and there is not a great deal to be done in the way of breaking new ground ; but here it is very difficult. . . .

Umm al Ba'rur, February 2.—Back again, after the coldest four hours in the launch which I have yet experienced in Irāq. It is a glorious bright day, but with a bitter north wind. . . . It is awfully nice to be at home and by a good fire !

To Lady Mary Murray—

February 4.—To-day's mail brought me my English papers with news of, and comments on, the Amritsar 'massacre.' A year ago, and I should certainly have joined in the howls of righteous indignation raised by the *Nation* ; to-day, I feel just as far removed from this point of view as from the *Morning Post's* complacent verdict. Nobody knows, until they've tried, what it feels like to be quite alone with an entirely unreliable and inadequate force amid rumours of trouble and unrest : and although, thank goodness, the balance here is still on the side of



ARABS AT WORK.

(a, Digging a new canal from the main river at Hijariyah ; b, c, Loading earth for filling up the site of Ghammas ; the flood-bank protecting Ghammas, built September, 1920, is seen on the left of c.)



security, I can understand General Dyer's feelings only too sympathetically. Does this sound to you very awful? You say Mr. Murray says my work sounds frightening; well, it is, and if I treated my 'flock' (as they call themselves) as I should be obliged to treat Englishmen, it would be simply impossible to carry on at all. . . . Is the proper answer to this that one shouldn't accept such a position, that an alien ruler's position is either impossible or wrong, and that the Arab should be left alone? I don't know: sometimes I think so, and then I remind myself that after all it will be a long time before there is an *Umm al Ba'rur Advertiser* to pillory me in its columns, and that I might as well carry on for a time. At all events, I haven't yet sentenced anyone to be flogged! . . . This afternoon, as I was going from my house to the office, three women rushed at me, and seizing my legs, arms, and wherever else they could get a hold, implored me to release their sons, brothers, husbands, and whatnot, five of whom are at present in my prison on a charge of horse-stealing. I managed to prevent their kissing my feet and to shake them off without being violent (aided by a small boy, one of the office staff, who fell to with a will), but I will admit that I felt excessively ruffled for a long time afterwards, and the tears of even the somewhat lachrymose Arab women are extraordinarily embarrassing to an Englishman.

One of the Najaf staff, an Egyptian, who more or less started this district at the end of 1919 (a most excellent fellow) signalised his time here by getting over 3000 dogs killed actually in the town—a place of perhaps 1500 inhabitants. He has lately had a bad breakdown in health and been given two months' leave; and it is doubtful if he will return to us. The servants here were talking about his illness the other day, and one of them said in all seriousness, 'Doubtless God has afflicted him with this sickness because he ordered all those dogs to be killed.'

If I could translate literally to you the sort of things that are daily said to me and that I say in reply, I really think you would be astonished. Many of them, of course, have no longer their literal meaning preserved any more than in our 'Good-bye.' Still, whenever I return from an



absence of a day or more, my small servant, a dirty little boy of about fourteen, always says 'God bless you,' and the office boy adds 'God give you happiness.' When a relief comes over from the regimental headquarters at Abu Sukhair to replace the militia guard on my office, the N.C.O.'s in charge always come up and kiss my hand—a very solemn proceeding—which is their way of reporting. When I suggest to a petitioner that what he's saying isn't quite true, he invariably replies, 'No, by God, I swear upon my head, O Hākim!' When a Saiyid is charged with any offence, if he is acquitted my Assistant addresses him somewhat as follows: 'For this offence you might easily be put in prison for ten years: but inasmuch as the heart of his Excellency the Hākim is very kind and his disposition tender, and seeing that you are a Saiyid and therefore a son of the Prophet of God,' etc., etc.—this because all Saiyids (and my district is thick with them) claim descent from 'Ali, the son-in-law of Muhammad. Finally, when a compliment is paid me (and no Arab can speak to a Hākim without fifty of the most glowing compliments), if I remember my manners, I solemnly ejaculate, 'I ask pardon of God.'

It remains to add, what perhaps I have told you before, that nobody takes any stock by the name of God, perhaps because it is so commonly on their lips; and that the only oath by which a man can be bound is that on 'Abbas the grandson of 'Ali; and that only when the oath is actually made within the shrine of 'Ali at Karbala. People constantly come with petitions asking that they and their opponents may be sent to swear at Karbala, and off they go, if ordered, and once they have sworn there, the statements made are implicitly accepted, whereas no other oath matters at all and no one accepts it.

The Shi'ah religion is deadening, obscurantist, and definitely anti-human from beginning to end, and it is a curse on the face of the earth. Not one scrap of the ethics of the Prophet is remembered, God is a meaningless term, and all the expressions that I've quoted are survivals of the free desert speech of the Arab before he was spoilt by the fruits of his conquests and particularly the worse side of Persian religiosity. The Qu'ran is in parts magnificent, and there is hope for the Sunni: but the Shi'ah seems to

me to be blighted from birth, and that's why the peasant is such a much better and honester man than the sheikh and the 'gentleman'; his religious knowledge being somewhat on the scanty side.

I am down to come on leave in August via Aleppo, but I think it unlikely, and have written asking my people here for next Christmas.

To his father—

Umm al Ba'rur, February 5.— . . . Daud went off this morning in my launch and will get to Baghdad to-morrow. . . . I am going to miss him very much indeed, and in some ways the work will suffer: but it will be invaluable experience for me, as I shall now have literally to do and know everything myself. . . .

I am off again on tour to-morrow for about three nights, I expect, to see first of all a nice old man called Waddai. He lives about twelve miles up stream, no great distance from Kufa, and is sheikh of a small tribe called al 'Ali, who own a fine piece of land, on which, however, during the last few years, there has been no crop at all, mainly owing to floods and war conditions. Consequently this year he is very hard up indeed, and as the land has not been kept in order, an enormous amount of silt clearance and drainage is necessary. This he has taken in hand, and I have obtained Government assistance for him; so my visit will be quite in the nature of a pleasure trip. . . .

. . . When a sheikh becomes poor through his land going out of cultivation, all his felalîh (the Irâq equivalent of fellahîn) leave him and go elsewhere in search of a living; and only the sheikhly family and its personal retainers and a few odd cousins (who actually own the land occupied by the tribe) remain behind and starve in dignified poverty, or take to thieving. Then, when by some lucky accident, or (as in this case) by the mercy, folly, or statesmanship of the Hâkim, the sheikh gets assistance to prepare the land and buy seed, back come the felalîh and the tribe is itself again. Thus, the country being underpopulated, the labour goes where the living is easiest made, and incidentally the system totally discourages intensive

cultivation and efforts to improve the crop and increase the yield.

[In reply to his apologies for not having visited Waddai oftener the latter said] with a broad smile (he has such a capital twinkle in his eye): 'We, your flock, are like wives: and, if the husband pays constant attentions to one, are not all the others jealous?'

I can see the time is coming when I shall really have to try and eat a meal or even spend a night with all my 'wives,' and there are over fifty of them, sheikhs, sirkals, and saiyids. Up till now I have actually stayed in about fifteen or twenty different madhifs, or at all events eaten meals in them: but hitherto I have been too busy to go anywhere except where there was an actual work to be done. In this way I have, of course, come in contact with most of the personalities in the district, for, when I am entertained in a madhif, all the surrounding people drop in to share the feast. But there are an enormous lot of people with whom I haven't yet eaten a meal, and with an Arab this process is very sacred and immensely important. In fact it is practically impossible for me to drop in to any madhif in the morning and not stay for lunch, which is of course immediately slaughtered on my arrival, whether I say I am going to stay or not. . . .

I dined with Azra two nights ago. . . . He told fascinating stories about the past and about my sheikhs and the way the Turks treated them. In particular there was a capital story of one Abadi, a very rich man . . . a thoroughly slippery character with whom I have a great deal to do. Azra described how one day the Turkish Hākim, with a body of troops, arrived in Abadi's madhif, and demanded 600 liras as tax. In the whole of Abadi's tribe there was not 600 liras to be found. Abadi came flying in to Azra very early and implored him—the despised Jew—to lend him the money. Azra knew the Turkish Hākim well and had had previous dealings with him: he rode straight out to the madhif, and there was the Hākim, sitting on the ground and the lunch spread before him and the people imploring him to eat: and he, in a furious rage (with guns levelled on all the exits) saying he wouldn't lunch till he got his 600 liras: and there was a general air of panic. Azra wrote him the local equivalent

of a cheque ; and he at once fell to, and the air cleared. ' And to think,' said Azra, ' that that Abadi isn't loyal to *your* Government.' It's always a pleasure to talk to anyone so unaffectedly pro-British as Azra, especially after reading the *Nation*. . . .

To his mother—

Umm al Ba'rur, February 9.— . . . I had a most amusing and pleasant day and two nights with Waddai, when I went on Friday. He is a delightful old man, very candid, intensely courteous, and only too anxious to make one comfortable. I had with him the unique experience which Doughty, the Arabian traveller, describes as it happened to him in the tents of the Beduw ; but I never expected to find it among my rather fanatical settled population. However, his tribe seems to retain a good deal of its desert atmosphere. I will recount the incident as nearly as possible as he spoke it ; but you must add to your picture of the scene a dim madhif with a bright log fire and lamps ; the roof wreathed in smoke ; forty or fifty men sitting silently smoking on each side ; old Waddai out to entertain me, and myself rather embarrassed for lack of the proper turns of phrases, and a desire not to hurt his feelings.

W. We have a saying ' Muzawwij o ba'dak ? ' (a slang way of saying ' Are you married yet ? '). I put the question to your Honour.

I. Not yet.

W. Why not ? You can't possibly go on like that. Why doesn't your Honour take an Arab wife ?

I. Surely none of your people would allow one of their women to marry a man that's not Muslim ? Isn't this nejis (unclean) ?

W. Not at all. If only you'll accept, I'll give you a girl here and now.

I. Thank you very much indeed, but our customs are a little different from yours, and one of them is that we may only have one wife.

W. Well, take only one then.

I. But suppose next time I go on leave I want to marry an English girl, what will she say to my Arab wife ?

W. When you go on leave, you will of course divorce your Arab wife.¹

And when I retired to my tent, which he had furnished most beautifully with rugs, divans and lovely braziers to keep me warm (it really looked like a harem), he said, 'Are you quite sure you want to sleep alone?'

He was extraordinarily amusing in many other ways; he asked how he could make me enjoy my visit, and kept saying 'Are you sure I'm not talking too much?'

As regards the offering of a bride you must remember that this is a traditional compliment, which, for all I know, she would have herself considered an honour. You would be very far out if you drew theories of the degradation of women under Islam from the above story.

I had a curious request made me in a petition to-day. The man complained that some of his sheep had been stolen; he knew who the thieves were, and went to them and asked them to come with him and swear before a 'holy man' as to the theft; and they, being professional watchmen, and therefore ex-officio belonging to the class, tribe, or secret society of professional thieves (the Janabat of whom I wrote last November), were obliged to consent, but said he must give them journey-money. This seems to show a very curious piece of mentality. The total journey involved is perhaps thirty miles, so the amount of journey-money couldn't be much. The man petitioned for an order to send them to swear without his having to pay journey-money, and this I reluctantly gave him. I hate lending official sanction to these very unofficial proceedings, and would give a good deal to be able to put down this monstrous custom of going to a holy man to swear; but it is too deeply rooted to touch at present.

To return to Waddai; I had interesting meals with him. He is at the moment very poor indeed, and I don't

¹ In another letter he says that Waddai added: 'But think how useful she would be to you in your house!' And he adds: 'Purely on grounds of comfort I cannot maintain that my menage couldn't be the better for a few feminine refinements; indeed, your letter arrived to find me in the middle of some sewing. At the same time I can dismiss my servants at any time if I don't like their faces, and can select them with a fair probability of success: whereas, had I accepted the wife offered me by my sheikh I shouldn't have known what I was in for until the fatal bond was signed and I had paid over the £10 or so required; in which circumstances a woman about the house might be rather trying.'

expect rice has been seen in his madhīf for a long time. However, of course he turned out for me a most wonderful meal, including two rather good new dishes, a pickled egg and rice cakes, and also a sort of spinach : and the rarity of such a banquet was shown by the number of people who partook and the way they finished up every scrap. I counted the number who dined one night, and it made sixty-three, plus two tiny boys, his youngest sons, nice children of about four or five. The meal being duly laid in the usual way, numberless dishes round the central pile of rice, the 'first dinner' consisted of myself, the old man and his two infants, and four visiting Saiyids, who, hearing of my presence, had ridden in to pay their respects. The next lot, who took our places when we retired, after ten or fifteen minutes' hard work with the right hand, numbered eight, and included my mounted escort (a delightful odd creature with one eye and an incredible horse) and other minor but distinguished persons : the third round numbered twelve, and the fourth fourteen, by which time there wasn't much left but gnawn bones and bits of rice : then a mixed and ravenous company of small boys, very shy in the presence of the Hākīm, fell in with a will, and, what with the three madhīf cats, who got a good innings between each course, properly cleared the decks. The whole process of feeding sixty-five humans took thus exactly one hour. . . .

As regards the Persian policemen, Najaf being pre-eminently the holy city of the Persians, is (by us) policed with Persians under Fear, of whom I've told you, and very good they are.

To Miss Barbara Smith—

February 9.— . . . Seriously, it's a very good life and though much of Irāq is of course beastly, Shamiyah is very much the reverse, being extremely beautiful country and full of, on the whole, intensely attractive people and problems, as well as having great material possibilities. I don't wonder a bit that your brother¹ is returning ; it will be great fun to see him again, though I suppose he'll be in Baghdad mostly. I don't myself feel very much

¹ Lionel Smith, M.A., Education Department, Baghdad.

drawn to the Education Department, which has got the biggest job of all if this country is to make good, and will be up against great religious and social problems every minute from dawn to dusk for the next fifty years ; but I think it a magnificent adventure for anyone who can tackle it.

As for my own life, it continues to be quite incredible ; and if I had time to stop and look at it, I might well collapse from demoniacal laughter or possibly be shocked out of my senses at the change which has evolved in the mind of one who a year ago had little use for governments and none at all for alien governments. As it is, however, I haven't even time to remember one-tenth of the funny things that are said to me and done by me every day : and living alone one feels the need of an after-dinner companion with whom to rub up the humour of the day's work. . . .

. . . In the intervals [of public works and judicial business] I do a bit of work on my Municipalities (I have two, and they flourish rather well). All my officials are extraordinarily corrupt, but that is unavoidable : when they aren't putting half the daily market dues in their pockets and giving the other half to the Town Clerk to keep his mouth shut, they take twice as much as they ought, so that I may be able to record ' a gratifying increase in the monthly returns ' ; so they need a bit of looking after.

To his father—

Umm al Ba'rur, February 15.— . . . You ask about the salting of the land. Experts appear to differ, but it seems that land can quite successfully be washed, so as in two or three years to free it from salt, as is done in Egypt ; and indeed the Arab does this himself in a primitive way. The land does show a great tendency to go salt, and in parts of my district which are desert the surface is so white with salt crystals that it looks exactly like a heavy snowfall. It is fairly certain that the soil is not nearly so productive as it was in the last two thousand years B.C., when enormous areas now desert were under continuous cultivation : and an Arab historian of about 1100 A.D. quotes as common knowledge that the richness of the soil had fallen off in the past few hundred years. On the

other hand, since the Muslim conquest in the seventh century irrigation has been going from bad to worse until the Turks finally ruined what was left of the Babylonish system in the fourteenth century ; both rivers got utterly out of control, and the country hasn't had a chance.

The immediate results of the Hindiyah barrage and canals consequent upon it have been an enormous increase in crops, and I personally have no doubt that if we had the population and a loan of about twenty million pounds to do the necessary irrigating works we could make of the country a perfect gold mine in a very few years. In the absence of labour, and with nobody very anxious to lend the money at present, it will be a slow job, but even so I personally think it should pay, though of course in the present troubled state of our northern frontier defence will for some time be an expensive job. And although the country is politically very rich indeed in some things, it's entirely without other vital things like wood and stone and metals, except far away in the Mosul province ; and it will be a long time before communications are at all good—at present they're very bad indeed.

I have much more work than I know how to manage at present, and am missing Daud more every day. . . . It is of the troublesome kind, and I have a number of more or less insoluble problems before me. Yesterday, when on tour at Abu Shora, I had to try a small sheikh for a serious offence, resisting the order of the Government by armed force. It was purely an inter-tribal feud, the remains of a bitter blood quarrel extending over very many years, but very unpleasant : still, I'm thankful to say that no shots were fired, or it would have been worse still ; the other party had sense enough to go away. I sentenced him to hand over 100 guns and 100 daggers within five days or go to prison. He denied having any guns at all, so I sent him straight off under an armed guard to Najaf. As, however, his paramount sheikh came to me at once and offered to guarantee fifty guns and fifty daggers, and there were some reasons mitigating the offence, I accepted this and called him back. I think, however, that the sight of him being marched off was probably salutary.

Then I had to try four horse thieves, a most trouble-

some case which has been dragging on for six weeks. I sentenced three, against whom the evidence was comparatively overwhelming, but Arabs are such incredible liars that one never knows; however, I gave one two years, one one year, and one six months, and sent them all off to Najaf for confirmation. I hate judicial work, and have an almost irresistible desire to release anyone the moment he pleads not guilty; but we are having a lot of trouble with thieves just now, and, as these people all belong to the profession of thieving, they are probably guilty.

On Friday I rode up to the Hillah boundary to meet the A.P.O. Hillah about a boundary dispute. This was quite a dramatic performance. Our rendezvous was a lonely Tell or mound out in the desert, called Abu Dhuhab or Father of Gold, and representing, no doubt, the site of some Babylonish city. As I with my party of seven or eight sheikhs and funny people approached this mound, suddenly we saw away on our flank about fifteen black lines dancing in the mirage, and these resolved into the A.P.O. Hillah and his satellites, who arrived exactly as we did—good timing. We dismounted and sat on the mound, and entirely failed to come to a decision, as I profoundly disagreed with him both on matters of fact and matters of principle; but I found him an entirely pleasant person who was my year at Oxford (è Coll. Exon.) and knew very well Freddy Ogilvie of Balliol, now tutoring at Trinity. He had also brought a bottle of beer, which made him doubly welcome in that thirsty land.

We parted about two P.M. and I rode back and slept that night at Najaf. I rode back here from Abu Shora this morning, doing the distance of about sixteen miles in one and three-quarter hours, which is record speed: I have just got a new and most beautiful horse, which is a perfect joy to ride, my old one having become quite past work. I found lots of office work here on my return and have been at it all day. To-morrow I am to ride out to a point about eight miles away on my Eastern boundary to meet the P.O. Diwaniyah and discuss an irrigation problem with him: on Tuesday I am fairly free: on Wednesday morning I have several conferences with about twenty different sheikhs, and in the afternoon I ride to Ghammas, where I shall probably remain Thursday

and Friday : and on Saturday I expect Major Norbury and the Irrigation Officer for a few days. . . .

To his sister—

Umm al Ba'rur, February 17.—I can provide you with lots of material for a work on Public Finance, especially as we have just made up our budget. One third, or rather, as it is in this Division, 30 per cent., is as you say, at first sight very high ; but the explanation given is that the land is all Government land, and the tax of 30 per cent. includes rent. The Turkish demand varied in different provinces, running in places as high as 47 per cent. : but of course they never succeeded in collecting anything like this over a district owing to the vast number of officials, all of whom had to be bribed. Of the 30 per cent. that we take, we repay to all sheikhs and sirkals 3 per cent., on the whole (leaving our net takings only 27 per cent.) as a kind of reward for punctual payment and general good behaviour, and in return we bind them over to arrest criminals and do the public works that we from time to time require of them. This latter arrangement, while in principle very bad for a lot of reasons too complicated to explain, is exceedingly useful at times, and certainly strengthens our hold on the 'ruasa,' or head men. Theoretically, I believe, the Turks admitted that as the Government owned the land and took anything from one-third to one-half of the produce, it was responsible for doing the necessary irrigation works ; but in practice of course nobody did them. My own theory is that in big things Government ought to help up to the extent of one-third, and I have got this carried out to the extent that I am now spending about 20,000 rupees on developments worth probably nearer two than one hundred thousand : but as regards flood banks so much work is necessary every year that the tribes do it without much urging, knowing that it is in their own interest, otherwise they would be drowned. We only take 30 per cent. off actual grain crops, our demand on dates being much less, also on fruit and vegetables, while a sheep pays only eight annas a year. The Arab has such a large number of ways of making a bit, owing mainly to the ease with which vegetables, etc., grow, and the fact that sheep, cattle, and

donkeys never require any food (other than straw) beyond what they can pick up, that our 30 per cent. isn't really very oppressive. Where it is oppressive undoubtedly is that we haven't yet got an income-tax, assessment being the great difficulty. The Turks tried it, but it was a failure, and we are now, I believe, trying to work out details; but at present of course the farmer, who benefits least, is paying for almost the whole cost of Government, while the merchant, who benefits most from Government, and also is, in the present state of world prices, growing excessively rich, contributes nothing in direct taxation. But income-tax without banks and accountants, etc., is difficult to handle.

. . . I'm leading an awfully strenuous life at present, but in spite of it am becoming excessively fat. On Thursday I rode about 16 miles, on Friday 22, on Saturday 8, on Sunday 15, and yesterday about 18, about 80 miles in five days, which, though not long in actual distance, yet when combined with a lot of troublesome work is exhausting, especially as I galloped most of the time. . . .

I have had an enormous lot of troublesome little jobs lately, the sort of which you can find no solution which doesn't leave everyone grumbling: and to-day I have had some stupid people bothering me about a marriage, which might perhaps be amusing from England, but seen through the haze of tribal quarrels it is unpleasant. One of my minor officials claimed a girl to whom he had been betrothed two years ago (he had paid the necessary money to her father), but the girl's tribe objected on the ground that previously this girl had been allotted to someone else in part payment of blood-money, following murder. The girl's father was called here, and said he wanted the girl to marry the official; the complainants did not appear, but to make the matter safe we sent the prospective bridegroom, the girl, and the father, to the religious Court at Kufa (known as the Shara' and recognised by us), in order to get a pronouncement. The Hākīm Shara' (a holy Najafi) pronounced that there was no objection to the marriage, and I thereupon wrote an order confirming his decision, and the wedding took place. To-day the paramount sheikh and also the sub-sheikh came with very long faces and said this would never do; the tribes had no

use for religious courts and the Shara', and could not admit that such matters should be decided by tribal custom. I replied that I knew all about tribal custom, that some of it was good and some very bad, and that they would jolly well have to stop the payment of women as part of blood-money, and that the British Government would never recognise it. So he then said that anyway the mere idea of the woman herself being consulted (which apparently Daud had previously essayed) was too shocking for words, and that it would be the end of the world if women were allowed a say in such matters. This, by the way, was the big sheikh; all the little man managed to get out was 'Your honour can do no wrong, but we of the tribes never saw such things,' when I shut him up. I was of course in a strong position because of the Shara' decision, and they went away thoroughly disgusted.

I did another amusing piece of work to-day. This morning my Mayor, a good man, came and said that some people were always gambling in the town and were stripping their families to find money for this, and it was a public scandal and they would certainly be led to steal and what not. Gambling is of course forbidden to the Muslim, and is illegal under the Ottoman Code, so four of them, in great terror, were brought before me, and after I had vigorously harangued them, were made to sign a recognisance that if ever they were caught gambling again they'd go to prison and pay enormous fines.

I have decided quite definitely that you are to come here next November, and you had better learn at once to ride a horse.

To his mother—

Umm al Ba'rur, February 20.— . . . The Major and the Irrigation Officer are coming here the day after to-morrow, and the following day we all ride about eight miles east to a place on the Diwaniyah boundary, where we are to meet Colonel Howell and the P.O. Diwaniyah, and discuss a great and very promising scheme for reclaiming a very large bit of land, spreading rice cultivation, and getting water for winter crops on to an enormous piece of land on the Diwaniyah side. The scheme has very great possibilities for me here, as it will enable me cheaply to

build a road to Diwaniyah, where the railway is already. I got back from Diwaniyah to this place the other day in an hour and forty minutes, and it is twenty-three miles. I came by car to a point about seven miles from here, and galloped the rest of the way home. So if we could get the motor road right through, this place would develop enormously, and besides, I should be well in touch with civilisation.

It will be extraordinarily interesting to see what five years will do for this country in the way of roads, railways, and other little developments which our Romantics, and Socialists too, affect to scorn and think retrograde and bestial; but, if they knew what the pilgrim has to put up with, or even what it's like for me sometimes, they would reconsider.

Have I told you that a refreshment room is about to be opened at Ur Junction? This is where Abraham lived.

The marriage case is explained further in a subsequent letter:

To Captain F. Baines—

Umm al Ba'rur, February 27.—I'm involved in an awful muddle about a marriage case; it's very complicated, but a certain sheikh, backed by a big man, head of Bani Hasan (Alwan al Hajji Sa'dun, of whom you might have heard in your Najaf days), claims that the girl in question was allotted to his people as *fasl* . . . whereas I've turned down the application for *fasl* and ordered a marriage between her and someone else, with her father's consent and backed by a pronouncement from a Shi'ah 'Alim of Kufa. So Alwan has gone and made an awful tale about it at Najaf, leaving out the *fasl* part and touching up the story with hints that if the order isn't reversed there will be bloodshed; and so now I'm ordered to call a *mejliss* of sheikhs and have the matter determined according to tribal custom. This is a peculiarly difficult and unpleasant job. . . . I am determined not to put my name to any settlement of *fasl* in terms of women. Not that the women mind, I think, for neither way do they get much chance of choosing their men, or husbands either for that matter; but because in this case I have the best of reasons for knowing that Alwan is out for trouble. . . .

I returned here yesterday after an absence of two nights to find that thieves had been at work on the wall between my house and my civil treasury (containing about 50,000 Rs.) and had got a good way towards making a hole right through, but had abandoned it without leaving a trace. . . . Well, my Janabat [see *ante*, p. 177] were put on to see what they could do; and as a result they have arrested six beauties, in the houses of three of whom were found housebreaking implements and some stolen property, while against the others there is no evidence except that they are the sort of people who would go in for a robbery of this sort. For, as my Town Clerk gravely pointed out, only a really first-class thief would take upon himself to enter the house of the Hākim and try to rob the treasury, not the kind of man who steals horses and sheep and such little things. I implored him to produce some sort of evidence against the arrested six; but there is none except the housebreaking tools, which might be anything; in return he rubs in the unanswerable fact that somebody must be made an example in so serious a matter, and all these six are really great thieves. I don't know what to do to them: and that's another little trouble. But there are lots of other scratchy little things which have come thick and fast just lately.

However, the weak point in the traditional scheme of thief-catching showed itself presently. Saumarez writes to Lady Mary Murray (February 22):

The method of recovering [the property] is to spot (Heaven knows how) the thief: he of course denies the charge and has hidden the spoils. Thereupon off go the accuser, the presumed thief, and the paid watchman, in a body to Karbala (a two or three days' journey), where he is made to swear by 'Abbas, a descendant of 'Ali. If he swears there that he has not stolen the things required, he is released. This oath by 'Abbas and taken actually in the shrine at Karbala is the only oath recognised at all by the ordinary Arab, and perjury there is said to be extraordinarily rare.

Yesterday, however, my watchman went to arrest a suspicious character, and found in his house some stolen property which he had denied taking by this same 'Abbas.

Such perjury clearly strikes at the root of the watchman system ; my watchmen are furious, and want the man very heavily sentenced, but I doubt if a Court of Law will regard this as worse than any other perjury, an offence which is almost no offence among Arabs. The Court of Law will certainly be wrong if they don't realise how serious this is, for the oath by 'Abbas is the only really strong hold which one has in theft cases, and if it goes the way of other traditional beliefs, no amount of police will protect the people from these professional thieves, who are amazingly expert.

Muhammadan law gives one an amusing position in dealing with 'gay young men,' for both strong drink and gambling are definitely irreligious. I've just had to issue an order, rather reminiscent of D.O.R.A., that all the coffee shops are to be closed at 10 P.M. owing to the appearance of a small set of inveterate gamblers and drinkers. I suppose this is the sort of order which stirs up popular feeling against the 'foreign tyrant.'

The conference at the Diwaniyah boundary was inconclusive, and Major Norbury was kept by an accidental delay from going to Umm al Ba'rur *en route*. Consequently, as Saumarez writes to his mother, February 25 :

My servant was furious. He came up and said 'This is the second time we've spent five, six—ten rupees, and the Major hasn't come : among Arabs it is the custom that if a man tells another that he will dine with him on a certain day and then fails to appear, he must pay to his host a fine of five women !' So I said I'd ask the Major for five women. . . .

[The doctor from Najaf, Dr. Halley, stayed at Umm al Ba'rur for three days.] My little dispensary is going quite well now, and his visits are tremendously appreciated by the people. Yesterday no less than sixty sick turned up, none of them at all bad, for the pleasure of getting a dressing or a prescription.

Whenever one imprisons anyone in this country, all his womenfolk come and try to get him released by the simple process of falling upon one and kissing one's boots or any other part they can get hold of. Now that I have

ten prisoners, this business has become such a nuisance that I have had to order a policeman to go before me from my house to the office and back, about forty yards, in order to defend me. The women follow me wailing and screeching, and when they do seize upon me the police are very gentle with them and don't like to pull them away, because of a sort of sanctity which attaches to this method of entreaty. If I had a beard and they seized it, I should have to listen to them according to immemorial custom, a good reason for remaining clean shaven.

Yesterday my Town Clerk came to me and said that a company of strolling players had encamped outside the town, and wanted permission to come and perform within the town. He was most anxious they should not be allowed, and said some mischief would certainly come of it if they did, and that (as they, their women especially, were a thorough bad lot) it would be best to send them away altogether. This I regretfully did, feeling rather hypocritical, for I should have liked nothing better than to go and talk to them, and get them to dance for me; but I have no doubt he was right about their morals. Of course Islam is most terribly Puritan in this way, and is all the worse for it, as there are no amusements whatever, and no one does anything except sit in a coffee shop and tell lies. I think I told you that I delivered a homily to four gamblers in the town the other day; and followed it up by an order that all the coffee shops must be closed at 10 P.M.

. . . You ask about Saiyids. The word simply means 'Master,' and in Egypt and by Sunnis generally is used to equal 'Sir'; but among Shi'ahs, which all my people are, it has the special sense of meaning a lineal descendant of 'Ali, the son-in-law of the prophet. There are an enormous number of Saiyids in Najaf and the country round it, many of whose genealogies must be very shadowy; and in fact it is generally admitted that most of our Saiyids have no claim to the required relationship. Every day I have petitions beginning 'Alda 'i rajul faquir Saiyid ibn rasul Ullah'—which means literally, He who pleads is a poor man, a Saiyid, son of the prophet of God. Theoretically a Saiyid can be trusted to swear the truth; in practice, however, he is the dirtiest scoundrel of all,

because of his religiosity. Some of them have a great sanctity, e.g. Saiyid Mohsin Abu Tabikh of Ghammas, whose genealogy is good ; people will come into his house to pray, and smear their fingers on the wall with henna to make a vow. . . .

To his father—

Umm al Ba'rur, March 1.— . . . To-morrow night I am going to 'sleep out,' not for purposes of work—the circumstances are amusing. A not very important man, who lives about five miles away—a small sirkal—had his madhif burnt down two or three months ago. He has now rebuilt it, and, in an excess of courtesy, refuses to occupy it until I have honoured it by taking a meal there. I like the man personally, so I thought I couldn't do less than gracefully accept, in spite of the bother involved in sending out my tent, etc. He is fearfully pleased at this : in a curious way the fact that the Hākīm has 'honoured' (as they say) their home by eating there does increase their importance in the eyes of their fellahs, and one begins to understand the arguments in favour of Royalty more sympathetically than I used to in England. The virtue is of course entirely impersonal : it is because I am something different from themselves, because I hold the keys of the Treasury, because I can put them in prison, etc., etc., not because I am J. S. Mann. . . .

I have caused quite a sensation in my town to-day by telling my Town Clerk that I wished to spend my accumulated municipal funds, amounting to over 10,000 rupees, on the improvement of the town within the next few months. I told him that I expected to see our Diwaniyah road completed within a few months and our Kufa road soon after, with a bridge joining them here in our midst ; that I thought this would bring a great increase in our trade, that the town would grow, and that the town should be worthy of such possibilities. The news about the roads and bridge, which everyone is crying out for, has of course gone all round by now, and it is tremendously important. I met an Engineer officer in Najaf on Friday who was down from Baghdad on this matter, and I expect him here in a few days to estimate for the Diwaniyah road, which is the first and simplest. When it is through I

shall be just over an hour by car from the railway station, and a little over nine hours from Baghdad.

The suggestions for spending the 10,000 rupees at present are two : a public bath (i.e. wash-house), and the paving of the bazaar with bitumen. The former is a good scheme : it would bring in an income to us, and the Arab loves his bath, which he will only take in a regular establishment (except the very lowest classes, who will bathe in the river). The paving of the bazaar is a big job, but well worth doing, in the interests of cleanliness : at the same time it doesn't much make for greater trade or progress. If we could start a school it would be a blessing, but we lack teachers ; this, however, I think will be remedied within a few months.

It is wonderful really how much trade and movement goes on without roads, and how inaccessible we are. In all this country there is only the road from Kufa to Hillah via Kifl, a horse tram from Kufa to Najaf, and an amazing railway from Kifl to Hillah, which is timed to run its 21 miles in $3\frac{1}{2}$ hours, and is often washed away. There is one bridge at Kufa, and one below Kifl, where the Hillah road crosses Shamiyah river.

Now, for my traffic to go to Diwaniyah, one must go through four or five feet of water for a distance of about 300 yards ; when the river is high one can only cross in a crazy roundabout ferry, and even when the river is low the average passenger on foot or with donkeys must get wet well above the waist. The same with Kufa, except that my Kufa road is entirely impassable in the three or four months of flood, and traffic has to go by boat to Abu Sukhair. My export grain goes up river in great hulks towed by six or eight men, either to Kifl for rail (but this is not much good, as there is a break of gauge at Hillah) or else right round to Hillah by boat, via the Hindiyah barrage, a journey of more than a hundred miles. Even to Kufa by river is a two days' journey as it must go up almost to Kifl before it can get into the channel.

Yet in spite of this I live on a high road ! Incredible as it may seem, a great part of the corpse traffic from the Tigris passes through here, coming from Kut across to Diwaniyah, thence to me, and so on to Kufa and Najaf, there to be buried in the sacred ground.

To his mother—

March 6.—Yes, the Arab is often a very handsome fellow indeed, though so far the ones included in my photos haven't been great beauties. But Khalil of Ghammas has an extraordinarily kind face, I think, though his temper is far from being similar—in fact, he's a very hard man, I fancy; but you have to be hard with Arabs. . . .

It is, as you say, a little hard that the public should both pay 30 per cent. taxes and also do all their own public works. At the same time there are two important considerations. First, no rent is paid for land—it all theoretically belongs to Government (except a very small bit called Tapu, which is complicated, and for our purposes unimportant): secondly, that, if Government paid for all necessary flood-banks, etc., it would be bankrupt before six months were out. Government, you see, is not making people do these works for its exclusive benefit; if they were one tribe living in harmony, their sheikh would force them, with more or less compulsion according to the strength of his position, to do these works, which are to rice land very much what ploughing is to English arable. And it is only because they are broken up into quarrelsome tribes that Government has to interfere, where two or more are concerned with one work. Finally, I have managed to get a little Government money for them, namely one lakh of rupees; of this I have given them 17,000 for various works, and issued 80,000 in loans to buy seed, recoverable next October: and this, though it doesn't go very far, has certainly done a great deal of good. This year is a most crucial year for my District; for, thanks to these labours (which are not due to me, but I get the credit for them as being 'The Government') with ordinary luck in the matter of floods we shall, Insha'allah, put nearly 20,000 acres under rice that have not borne rice for the last five years, double the wealth of the district, and (probably) bring back 500 to 1000 tribesmen who have wandered off elsewhere these five years for lack of a livelihood in their own tribes: thus restoring three important but sadly dwindled tribes to their rightful strength and position. So it was true that unprecedented efforts were necessary: and, if only no disaster occurs,

it will have been a very wonderful year for my riverain people. But when it's over, next autumn, there'll be as much again to be done for the northern section, Haur al Dukhir, for which as yet I've had no chance to do anything, and of which it may truly be said that, given money and hard work, we can certainly turn the desert into a garden and the starveling band of robbers, the Bani Hasan, into a rich and prosperous populace. So, if I'm left here another year, I shall have just as much to do and more, for there will be roads and talk of railways and perhaps even a bank, and all the things you never think about as you walk down the High Street, but which take a lot of starting; means of communication and of commerce, of education, and perhaps even some rational amusements.

Still, it is a most awful sweat; and I feel with you at times very conscience-stricken at having to force some of the poorer and weaker tribes to carry out these works. Just now there are only twenty days left before the floods, and everything important is finished save one big bank: a colossal job, nine-tenths of which has been polished off in record time by a tribe for whom I have done my best, and who are wonderfully grateful; the one-tenth which remains is the share of the wretched Bani Hasan, for whom I have done little or nothing because I simply couldn't tackle them this year, and had no money. About a dozen of their little sirkals, some of whom I like, but all of whom are famous liars, thieves, and murderers, came crying to me this morning that they couldn't do it; that they'd done their best, etc., etc. I believe that they've done precisely nothing, and I've got to hold them to it because they are people to whom one can't afford to make concessions: so I put them in a panic by saying that as they'd worked hard on it four days already (which was what they said), I would go up there to-morrow and see how much they had done before making my remission. So to-morrow I shall ride up and prove them for the liars they are; but it's no good, they readily admit they are liars, and their case is desperate.

When, however, this little job is done, I shall have no more cares on my mind regarding the floods. There will of course be breaches, but we have done our best to get things straight, and I believe are better protected than

was ever known within the memory of man. I should like you to see these great works; they really are rather wonderful, and look incredibly massive and as though they would last for ever; but the soil weathers in the sun and wind, and repairs are necessary every year.

. . . Yesterday, as I was having my first quiet Friday at home for two months or more, a pleasant veterinary officer arrived to treat the local buffaloes for rinderpest, of which there is a good deal about. They were collected this morning and inoculated, to the terror of their owners, who thought it was the evil eye or something worse. . . .

I have a new Indian accountant who will keep all my revenue accounts in English, and be a great blessing. . . . He came and asked if I would invigilate for him next month in his Hyderabad University Exam., to which of course I agreed. So he wrote a letter to the Principal asking that the papers might be sent here, and described me first as 'a distinguished graduate of a famous English University,' which I allowed to pass, and later on as one who 'in recognition of his first-class position as a lawyer at the English bar, has recently been made a First Class Magistrate,' which I had to prune! Indians are wonderfully imaginative, especially writing in English. I *am* a First Class Magistrate, which means I can give two years' imprisonment, and I've had to use the power lately on some of my professional thieves who are in need of some rough handling.

To Lady Mary Murray—

Umm al Ba'rur, March 7.—I've been out riding all day, covered I suppose nearly thirty miles, done a lot of 'strafing,' and returned distinctly tired. [He had first visited the Bani Hasan at work, as described in a later letter.] From this scene of woe (I hate making people work and having to tell them home-truths) I rode to look at a land dispute; this was pleasant, as the guilty party was not there, and I had with me only the injured persons, who, so far as I can see at present, are in the right. Their wants were satisfied by a promise of two policemen to be sent out to-morrow to prevent the intruders from digging within the boundaries of my people. So this was accomplished without hard words, and of course they thought

I was a wonderful fellow, and the very eye of justice and wisdom.

From there I rode to see a place where one tribe wanted to dig a new head to an irrigation channel in some one else's land. He of course protested loudly that he would be ruined, and talked very loud and very stupidly; and, after a fruitless argument and a fairly close inspection, I turned him down and gave them leave to carry on, subject to some fairly strict guarantees in the interest of the owner of the land.

There is my day's work for you; dull it looks on paper and not very complicated; in fact it has been interesting, troublesome, and exhausting. One has to work so very much by rule of thumb, for lack of facts and of knowledge; and although things do wonderfully get done, one is always rather worried by the thought that the result may not have been ideally very just, and that perhaps one has penalised someone in letting off another too lightly—thoughts which don't accord with rule-of-thumb work, and indeed are apt to unfit one for being a Hâkim in a country like this.

It's funny to think of an English Sunday on a day like this, especially an Oxford Sunday, with its Balliol concert now performing, and the wonderful rich, easy life that one led there, and couldn't of course realise how easy it was because one took all the accessories (music and novels and the motor-bicycle and a week-end, etc.) so completely for granted. I don't write this in the least from a hankering after it all again. . . . I always prayed for a hard life and I love it; but it is hard. . . .

To his father—

Umm al Ba'rur, March 10.— . . . I looked over my wall just now and I saw a body of about 100 men altogether with lamps, processing round and chanting vigorously and most unmusically, but the words were unintelligible; however they seemed to be enjoying themselves and I saw my servant singing away with the best of them. . . . [This turned out to be part of a celebration of the Persian New Year.]

. . . One is so much struck on reading the Qu'ran by the majesty and truth of very much the greater half, and the comparative unimportance of the little verses on

which, however, the bulk of the distinctive features of Islam are based. It is splendid stuff mostly, very largely re-echoing the Old Testament, with interesting additions that to my mind show that the Prophet knew a great deal of the New Testament also ; and of course the language, which is largely untranslatable, is glorious. I rather fancy an intelligent Baghdadi would say very much the same if he worked through our Bible after having spent six months in the attempt to govern, let us say, East Kent. I expect the difference between theory and practice is not much greater. But of course the Arab has no knowledge of the moral tendency of his Book : in the Holy City of Najaf, I don't suppose there are ten of the 'learned,' as they are called, who have the faintest idea of what it's all about, though they know it by heart. Here is a good verse (translation by J. S. M.): 'Righteousness is not of turning the face unto the East or unto the West : righteous is he that believes in God and the Last Day, the Angels, the Scriptures, and the Prophets : that gives of his wealth, for love of Him, to kinsfolk, the orphan, and the outcast, the son of the road, beggars and captives ; who is steadfast in prayer and almsgiving, mindful of his promise when he has promised, patient in distress, affliction and the time of trouble ; of such are the faithful ; these are they that fear God.'

Doesn't sound much like a 'jihad,' does it ; nor do the Beatitudes suggest a European war.

. . . [He had inspected the uncompleted flood-bank on the previous Sunday, and, on finding that the Bani Hasan had not done their share], I told them that they were liars, and that I should deal with them as such. I then divided up the work between them, and said that until each sirkal brought a note from the Mamur in charge that his share was finished, I wouldn't pay them any money in seed loans. They wailed bitterly, and said, 'If you order us to die, we will die,' and so set to work, and as a result the job is finished now, in three days, and they are all pouring in here with notes from the Mamur, to claim their money, as pleased as Punch. Their paramount sheikh, a useless fellow called Alwan al Hajji Sa'dun, whose advice I generally treat rudely, called on me to-day, and I supposed he was going to complain about my treat-





RUHABAH : DESERT ARABS.

(Arab recruits for the Native Police : sentry in watch tower.)



INSIDE THE KHAN AT RUHABAH.

(A relic of Khaza'il greatness : possibly much older.)

ment of them : but no, he was quite satisfied—however, he'd come to ask me to lend him 5000 Rs. as he's badly in debt, so perhaps he didn't want to take any risks. It's a good thing Arabs haven't learnt to strike yet. Why they do what I tell them is something of a mystery to me, but I suppose they think I can do far more to punish them than I really could, even if I wanted to.

To his mother—

Umm al Ba'rur, March 15.—On Friday, after a long talk [at Najaf] with one of the chief religious Najafis, Saiyid Hadi (known as Naqib al Ashraf) about a land dispute, I went to tea with him, and met there the leading Najaf merchant, called Hajji Muhsin Challash, a very able and well-informed man, about the only Arab I have met who knows about Europe and the war, and studies the newspapers. We talked for hours ; it was a great pleasure talking decent Arabic with intelligent people—they even know their own history. . . . In the evening we entertained 'the garrison' to dinner, namely the two British officers of a detachment of an Indian regiment which is stationed at Kufa. . . .

Yesterday I took on a job which the Major was due for, but as he hadn't turned up I volunteered, being glad of the chance. This was to visit a place called Ruhabah, down in the Syrian desert about 25 miles S.S.W. of Najaf, where we have a small post. It used to be a very important place, being on the caravan road to Hail, Central Arabia generally, and of course the Hejaz ; also, the Beduw of the desert Shammar and Aneyah used to come in there to buy grain from Najaf. Now the road is deserted, and the Beduins have all gone off to no one quite knows where : but some day, perhaps, they may return—the road, however, will not become again a thoroughfare. The Hejaz railway, of course, killed the sort of thing Doughty describes : and Central Arabia is all the darker.

Ruhabah itself is a queer place, just a solitary castle standing by a desert spring, the water of which (it is highly indigestible) is used also for cultivating some gardens, wheat, barley, and vegetables. The castle is old—three or four hundred years, I should think : the outside wall is intact, and some of the rooms, which are fine : and the

courtyard is filled with hovels, huddled together in the most amazing way, and bristling with lambs, fowls, dogs, and children. I suppose some 150 people live in it.

The Government agent in charge of the station is a Syrian of Damascus, and was very proud of his French, which he insisted on talking. I also talked French, but found I was constantly bringing in Arabic words, and had the greatest difficulty in writing an order in French.

I went down in a car : there is no road, but it is desert all the way, and so one can make one's own : the process is difficult, however, and wonderfully bad for the car, as one has to cross ditches and streams : and no car but a Ford could stand it. Ruhabah is the site of one of the great Islamic battles, Kadhisayah, but I believe no traces remain ; there was, however, at one time a row of cities in the desert there when water-levels were different, and one passes a lot of ruins. The desert is an appalling place, but it has an extraordinary fascination.

On my return to Najaf I went out with Mustafa to dine with the Kiliddar, or Keeper of the Shrine, a nephew of the above-named Saiyid Hadi, but the dinner wasn't very good and the conversation was very dull and nearly all compliments. I am not made for the society of the highly religious : they are so certain about the plans and wishes of the Almighty, not unlike their brothers at home. . . .

I was so delighted that you have been reading Doughty ; and, curiously enough, I have just read him through again. He is perfectly wonderful ; the style is often laboured, but it gives one the impression of the heat and hardness of the desert ; and his Beduw are wonderful. My people are exactly like his, only of course life is very much easier for them : though you mustn't forget that I have a very large desert population. You have a false impression if you think the banquets given to me are a sample of their ordinary food : on the contrary, these are very great occasions. My people, from sheikh to fellah, live on bread and dates as their staple.

. . . As for Ur, it is now mainly famous for having a railway refreshment room. The finds are said to be very interesting indeed, but it is like other famous places in this country, e.g. Babylon, in that the result is meaningless

except to the expert, and there is practically nothing to see. . . .

To his father—

Umm al Ba'rur, March 21.—The last few days have been a great Festival (the Persian New Year, called *Dukhul* or 'the Entering' by the Arabs), and all my office staff, together with many thousands of people from all over *Irāq*, made the pilgrimage to Najaf, returning to-day. I got two photos of the Najaf crowd, which I hope will be good; it is said to have been the largest for years—the roads were not so safe in Turkish times—and probably quite 50,000 people come in from the country. It was during this festival, indeed on this very day, two years ago, that Marshall, the first A.P.O. at Najaf, was murdered, and it was thought there might conceivably be a little trouble this time; but everything passed off most quietly, and it was an extremely cheerful and happy crowd. All my people seem thoroughly to have enjoyed themselves; though the city was so full that hundreds slept in the streets and it was very hard work getting through the bazaar.

. . . [After seeing Major Norbury] I've returned here quite full of fresh enthusiasms; I've got leave to make a proper dispensary, engage a local man to learn to dispense, and in general put that concern on a sound basis: I've got some more money to spend, and I've got rid of two very troublesome land disputes, besides a number of small things which were looking troublesome.

However, I've got a bad job in front of me at Ghammas, where the rise in the river last week washed away three important dams, all of which had been specially strengthened and had cost their owners a good deal of money and trouble. It is most important to replace them at once, otherwise rapids will form and some more land go out of cultivation, and I am going down there the day after to-morrow to see what can be done. But in a matter so important as this there's not very much difficulty in getting people to work with a will, and fortunately I have a little money up my sleeve to help them with. . . .

[There had been a plan of transferring him to Najaf and giving him both Eastern and Western Shamiyah; but

the question was settled by the appointment of another officer, Captain O'Connor, to Abu Sukhair, Saumarez being left at Umm al Ba'rur as before.]

. . . The country is greening up most beautifully, the peach blossom is well out, and the figs and other fruit trees are putting on their delicate greens. As for the barley, wheat, and vegetables, they are the most wonderful colour that you ever saw, the very richest emerald (perhaps only by contrast with the dry and dirty appearance of last autumn's stubble and weeds), and very thick, like old turf, a real refreshment to the eye. All these crops are irrigated entirely by lift-irrigation in my country, as land which will take flow-irrigation is all reserved for rice: so the total is not very great, as each lift can only do a certain fixed amount. But around Kufa, where vegetables for the Najaf market pay very well, the gardens are simply magnificent with beans, lettuce, radishes, onions, beetroot, etc. I have perhaps 4000 acres of wheat and barley altogether: we only take ten per cent. of this, as lift-irrigation is laborious and expensive: and the harvest comes next month; but it is a small affair compared to my rice, which I hope may be nearer forty than thirty thousand acres and give a very much heavier yield of grain per acre. . . .

A parson turned up at Najaf on Wednesday, so Hopkins and I had a Communion Service all to ourselves on Thursday morning.

To Lady Mary Murray—

Ghammas, March 24.—[After telling of various administrative difficulties, he continues:] I fancy the words of the General Confession are no truer of me than of any other Hākim, and there can be no profession in which one does more things one ought not to do and leaves undone those things which one ought to do than in this. This fact rather makes one reflect on the extraordinary gamble one is engaged in: for it is odd that an entire stranger, who at the beginning couldn't speak one word of the language, and whose mental make-up was about as different as could be well imagined, should be put straight away to an almost uncontrolled eminence from which to utter his fiats to a perpetual chorus of 'Kull shai tāmur ju-ābal

Insha'allah yaſir'—Every order given by your Honour shall, please God, be carried out.

So there's nothing for it but to go on gambling ; which explains, though it doesn't reconcile me to, the necessary periods of gloom, and allows by inference that when I come to Ghammas and see good firm earth and clean open spaces where three months ago there was stinking water and the foulest mud, I may pardonably cheer up somewhat. Of course everyone thinks his own job is the most difficult in the world. . . . Still a Hākim can produce this argument for his prejudice, that he never, or very rarely, has to deal with the nice side of people, being always concerned with debts and quarrels and crimes and the goading on of the unwilling, and there remains such an awful lot to be done. Still, the words put by Sa'di into the mouth of the Most High apply to him also, and in more ways than one: 'Rare among My servants is he that showeth gratitude.'

The coming of spring here has given me a horrible longing for England and Jerry.¹

To his mother—

March 27.—I am full of troubles at present, none of them very serious, but all rather bothersome. This, however, is the normal state of a Hākim. . . . I believe, however, that things are really going pretty well, and I have some reason to think that most people in the District give me credit for good intentions, though they don't always appreciate the result.

I came back from Ghammas yesterday after a two days' visit. . . . Apart from one very thorny dispute (between the staff), things seemed to be going well, and the levelling up of the town has proceeded apace. The Mamur has constructed a wonderful cart for bringing in earth, as I couldn't get a contractor with donkeys to take on the job ; of course, no wheeled thing was ever before seen in the place, and it is an odd creation, not unlike the machine

¹ His motor-cycle. He writes to Mr. F. E. De St. Dalmas, an old friend of his father, May 22 : 'So much does one value [news of what is going on in England] that I often read right through the advertisements in my home newspapers (particularly those of estate agents with their alluring descriptions of old houses in all the shires and counties) just for the pleasure of coming across a familiar name and having a pleasant memory conjured up for a moment.'

I used to ride upon down the garden paths.¹ A wheelbarrow would have been much better, but their inventive genius is not great. However, I am having three of these carts made, and hope to see a good lot of earth brought in as a result.

My long projected visit to the desert tribes is to come off next week. . . . I think I have told you that they want me to redistribute the whole of their lands, at least 250 square miles; I don't know whether the job is possible, but I shall pick up information in those three days (with the tribes) and it will be interesting.

[After relating mistakes by his office staff.] So I don't take anybody's advice for the most of what I do, because there isn't any advice to take. It is, however, awfully satisfactory to have someone on whom to unload really troublesome problems, and from whom one can receive the assurance that they are insoluble! This sounds very weak-minded, but what is generally put down as weak-mindedness is often more due to conscientiousness than the reverse. There is no doubt that to be able to make up one's mind quickly with Arabs and to go right through with any job, not caring a rap for anybody's feelings or interests, is the real policy; the only question is how far to carry your investigation before you make up your mind. And I am fairly certain that I give myself a vast amount of unnecessary labour and trouble by being over-considerate; but it's very hard to strike a mean. The Arab is such an inconsequent mixture of the knight of chivalry, the high-spirited child, and the fawning, false-tongued Oriental; he is essentially not an Oriental at all, and his mind, like that of the Jew, is European compared with the real Eastern races. Altogether he's a funny customer; and the hardest thing about him is that he doesn't really know his own mind, and has only the vaguest idea of what he wants, beyond the one common to all mankind, that wealth would pour down upon him without labour from the sky. It is only the romanticists of elaborate civilisation who praise labour as a good in itself; though they may be right, and certainly I don't envy my sheikhs, who have nothing to do but to drink coffee all day.

¹ A sort of scooter he constructed at the age of twelve.

To his sister—

Umm al Ba'rur, March 28.—You'll get this in May, and when I think of Oxford in May I could for a moment wish I were a don, or at least had acceded to Dewhurst's wishes, stayed up another year, and taken the Oriental Languages School. My river (this is impertinent on my part, seeing that the Wise think *my* river is none other than Gihon, and long before Abraham was born it carried ships and irrigated wide lands—well, I expect I'm about as efficient as Hammurabi's junior lords, so I shall still call it mine, until sacked)—my river is very reminiscent in places of the Oxford rivers (though of course rather larger) at this season on account of the budding willows and poplars all along the banks, interspersed with peaches, and the more tropical shapes of fig and palm. The country is now extraordinarily lovely, and it is a pleasure to be about, but my launch is broken, the paths are all under water, so there's no more getting about on horseback, and the progress of a boat, especially being poled and towed upstream, is very slow; and the midday sun these last few days has become excessively hot. The coming of spring has been extraordinarily sudden, owing to the lateness of the rain, and in this country one really can almost see the leaves grow.

I've been very full of troubles lately, but they've mostly cleared off to some extent and I feel hopeful at the moment. I shall, however, be awfully glad when Daud comes back, as one does need someone to talk to in this sort of a job, otherwise things get on one's mind, and the work (though not really heavy in the sense that long hours in an office are heavy) is really very exacting. I think that probably when things are most troublesome they are most successful, on the principle stated to me once by Col. Ready, that the efficiency of an Adjutant is in inverse ratio to his popularity; and I have had such a welter of compliments lately that while one can't help being mildly soothed by them, one wonders anxiously what awful plots are going on behind them!

We are now at an anxious moment in the year, when the cultivator's work on the lands is finished and he waits for the river to rise high enough to deposit its silt and so complete the tilth for sowing. We want a rise of four

inches now, and this is [Arabic word], i.e. *θεῶν ἐπὶ γούνασι*:¹ it is bound to come sooner or later, but if it doesn't come soon the early rice will be endangered by the burning heat of June on the higher and less marshy parts of the District. So all eyes are on the river, which swirls wildly down, its waters deep brown with the silt of many hundred miles of Irāq and the hills of Asia Minor (the snows are beginning to melt) and the name of Ullah recurs in every sentence when we talk of sowing.

I am reading 'The Last of the Barons,' and I was thinking what awful rot the language is when it occurred to me that, if I solemnly wrote down in literal English what my sheikhs say to me, it would be much more incredible. What about this? 'We pray the Lord that he would lengthen thy life, and prolong thy stay in this place; if thou dost but cast thine eye on our lands it sufficeth us, and thy presence is all that we ask. Thou art our father and we thy flock; show us thy command and we obey; grant leave that I may kiss thy hand,' etc., etc. It is clear to me that Doughty was obliged to adopt the style which has been so much criticised in 'Arabia Deserta' in order to carry off this sort of thing at all.

I secured a notable victory the other day. My small boy came in with a leather strap round his arm which he proudly showed me and said had cost him four rupees. It was a charm, and contained a magic writing from the Qu'ran, and he assured me it was good for keeping off bad things. I said, and he was forced to admit, that it wouldn't keep off a bullet at five yards: so he said, with the quick change characteristic of the Arab mind, that he'd throw it away. I advised him to sell it to someone else, as he'd been fool enough to buy it, and this he did! I was a good deal surprised at his taking my advice, for the local belief in the evil eye is very strong, and all young children and nearly all the horses wear a sort of blue glass bead for protection. The victory however wasn't quite complete, for next day I had a sty in my eye, whereupon he advised me that if I went and looked at a Jew I should be cured.

I hope you will go on the finest day in May to the top of the White Horse hill, taking with you a suitable companion, and having suitably arrived before eating your

¹ 'On the knees of the gods.'

lunch, which must be of eggs, sandwiches, and cake, will pronounce the words Ibn as Sabil (the word in the Qu'ran for wanderer, meaning Son of the Road) and will then suitably reconnoitre along the Old Road towards Wayland Smith's cave for some tinker or other beggar such as are always in that neighbourhood; that you will bestow on him one-fortieth of your annual income on my behalf and so return purified to Oxford. I went there five times last May and June, and there are not many more wonderful spots in the world. . . .

To Miss A. M. Routh—

Ghammas, April Fools' Day.— . . . My countryside here is covered with the garments of spring, but, except for fruit blossom (which is nearly over), there are absolutely no flowers. We shall, I hope, introduce them in time; almost everything in the world will grow here if only you water it: but the Arab has never seen flowers, and indeed has no words in his language for them: the Baghdad gardeners are Persians. I went the other day to sit with my rich and most charming neighbour, Azra the Jew, in one of his big gardens in Umm al Ba'rur, and wished I could have shown you round it: it is not a garden in our sense; the word here is applied to any piece of ground which contains trees, i.e. dates first, with other fruit trees to fill up. This garden was about two acres, walled in, and full of good trees: the orange and lemon shrubs were in flower, and there was one quince tree covered with blossom; the pomegranate leaves are just putting forth, and the fig trees clad in their very brilliant emerald. Underneath was about three-quarters of an acre of barley, and a good patch of broad beans; the rest of the garden was to be sown with millet in a few weeks. There were a few vines, but these had suffered rather, as this garden was abandoned and unattended till last year for five years, it not being safe for the Jews to go there and look after their property. The gardener, an Arab, is paid, according to the universal custom, in kind, not cash; he has no share in the dates, one half in all the fruits, barley, and millet, and I forget how much on the vegetables. So naturally there isn't much inducement to grow flowers, which in Umm al Ba'rur at least are never likely to have

much market value ! The method of paying by results has certainly much to be said for it ; and I should add that the owner is responsible for all the Government demands on the crops, so that the gardener doesn't come off too badly.

Anyway, it's a very lovely spot, being cool and green these summer evenings : we sat and drank tea under the trees, and I told them of the greenhouses at Kew and other such marvels. They have connexions with Baghdad and are very enlightened people, as is usual with Jews, and they have already sent for flower seeds and roses and I am going to try and get some also from the Government agricultural department. I have already a lot of vegetable seeds, but these are so dull.

[Referring to his coming visit to the tent dwellers (' people of the houses of hair ' in the desert) he says :] Their main wealth is in sheep ; and before the war they varied this with raiding and robbery ; but now that is all done with, they are taking to cultivation, and have this year about 5000 acres of wheat and barley, which I am going to look at. During the war, when they were left to their own devices, they had little wars of their own, and stole large portions of one another's land ; and now they want it all redistributed between them as it was in the past ; this is a big job, which I can't take on in a day, but hope to tackle soon, and meantime I want to reconnoitre them. . . .

To his father—

Umm al Ba'rur, April Fools' Day.—Now I am just off to Ghammas *en route* for my long promised visit to the desert people called Al Shibl. . . . I arrive at Ghammas this evening, sleep there, and early to-morrow go on in a boat with Khalil the Mamur to the edge of the desert, where Arab steeds, I hope, will be in waiting. Then we ride round the wide lands of the Shibl, see their wheat and barley, now almost beginning to yellow, and try and get at some facts about their quarrels and their landholdings. On Saturday I meet the A.P.O. Rumaitha at the Imam Nabi Isa, a remote shrine on our boundaries, and we investigate a question of water rights between the Shibl and a family of Saiyids called Albu Magoter, who belong

partly to me and partly to Rumaitha. On Monday I hope to do a land dispute over on the far side of the main river abutting on the Syrian desert (i.e. the same side as Najaf) and to get back to Ghammas that evening, returning here on Monday. . . .

I don't know where we shall sleep with the Shibl : they are the 'alil byut sha'r,' the 'people of the houses of hair,' and have no madhifs. I am taking my tent, of course ; but its transport in the desert is difficult. I am expecting a tremendous reception from them ; they are so much out of the way that they don't often see a Hākim, and they show their apparent joy with great profusion of language and much kissing of hands.

. . . I'm sorry you don't approve of my comparing my sheikhs to the Biblical people, but really they are identical types. You mustn't think that because some of my sheikhs are scoundrels they *all* are—very far from it. The patriarchal type develops certain virtues and vices, owing to the social unit being the tribe, and I imagine these developments are the same all the world over. The Arab has been to some extent corrupted by Turkish example, but the general teaching of Islam is Puritan, and the general standard of life even here is high in some respects, compared to what it is in civilised countries. Najaf, of course, is different.

To his mother—

Umm al Ba'rur, April 5.—I enjoyed my visit to the Shibl, though it had disadvantages. Their guest tents are divided by a curtain in the middle, the right-hand half being the abode of the chief's women, lambs, children, poultry, dogs, etc., which invade the public half : moreover, the supply of fleas is overwhelming. Then they are very poor indeed, and absolutely the only two dishes are boiled rice and boiled sheep : this is certainly good food, but it palls after three or four successive meals when absolutely unrelieved by any sweet thing. Then their language is almost totally unintelligible, not only to me but to the ordinary educated Arab ; and they can hardly understand one word of what I say. Still, they were very pleased to see me, and there were some very Doughty-like scenes, especially at nightfall under a full moon, when the sheep



are driven in from the khala and the mares are picketted beside the tent. The whole tribe foregathered, and I had about twenty-five riders with me as I went about. Unfortunately the A.P.O. Rumaitha never turned up, and the most important part of my business therefore failed. Still, I visited the people, which is always a good thing, and looked at some thousand acres of wheat and barley, and heard their troubles and grievances, and met nearly all their personalities, which was very useful for me personally.

. . . This is, of course, not a camel country and only the sheep-tribes, which go off grazing into the desert, keep them to any extent. I hope you did not endorse the views of R. [a demobilised private soldier] as to the 'unspeakable' Arabs. The British Tommy is not strong in the art of loving his neighbour, and he doesn't normally respect any man who talks a language that he doesn't understand. . . . No soldier gets a chance of seeing the country at all, and the number of people outside the Political Service who know anything at all about the Arab and his works is nil; while even in the Political Service it's not as many as it should be. . . .

To Mr. F. F. Urquhart—

April 7.—The summer returned here with a rush at the beginning of the month, and it's now desperately hot. After the gorgeous six months we have had, the sudden heat has rather knocked me over, but I shall very soon get used to it.

I got back from a tour the day before yesterday to find a wire announcing that Miss Bell and her father [Sir Hugh Bell] would pay me a visit the following day. I made great preparations, and they never turned up. As this is the fourth time running that visitors have announced themselves by telegram and not turned up (in two months) my cook is perfectly furious, and the townspeople, who regard visitors as public property (much like foreign Royalties arriving in London), think English manners are very odd, and thank God they are not as we are. By tribal custom a host whose guest doesn't arrive and fails to give warning may take from him a fine of five women; this is called 'hasham,' and my servant remarked vindic-

tively yesterday that if only I would enforce the hasham once, we should be quit of this sort of nonsense in the future. But the question might become difficult where the chief guest is a woman : Arab custom makes no provision for such an unheard-of orgy as a man entertaining a woman to dinner.

I have had more than my fair share of troubles these two months, and am now actively engaged in disputes with all my three neighbours of other Divisions, besides having a lot of thorny problems thrown at me by my own people. However, I have some evidence to show that the condition of the district is not too bad, particularly as regards general conduct and good will; the people are really beginning to absorb two elementary facts : (1) that peace means prosperity as well as security (for nearly everyone is a producer : there's no lack of work with new land constantly coming under cultivation) : (2) that the Government is really out to develop the country with roads and what not, and to give people something for their money. I believe we are in for a quite extraordinarily interesting decade, if we can be left alone.

But when I think of England in May I could almost wish I were a don : and beautiful as the spring is here, it lacks the flowers, scents, and bird songs of England.

[He writes to his father, April 10 :] There are no spring flowers worth speaking of, unfortunately. I saw one or two attempts in the desert the other day, but they were very small and insignificant ; I fancy the constant flooding of the land and the yearly overlays of silt are the cause of this sad deficiency.

To his mother—

Umm al Ba'rur, April 15.—My name has been accepted for the Proficiency Exam. [in Arabic] and I am supposed to be going off to-morrow to Baghdad. But I feel very disinclined to go, in view of an overwhelming series of troubles, one of which is rather serious, and all of which demand prompt and vigorous action. In the course of various organisation works, it became evident that I must break down some dams built in the no-government period, thus flooding a piece of land cultivated by a section

of the Shibl and doing a certain amount of harm also to cultivation in Abu Sukhair district. [The order, he goes on to say, had been confirmed and the Shibl warned before Christmas ; the execution had been delayed until the coming of a new A.P.O. to Abu Sukhair, when the order had been confirmed again.]

I sent off a party of about fifty under a considerable sheikh with two of my own officials to break down the dam : whereupon they were attacked by a body of Shibl and Abu Sukhair people (four or five to one), who fired rifles at them, wounded some of them with daggers, and succeeded in upsetting the boat containing the sheikh himself. The actual casualties were trifling, but of course the crime is a very serious one. The wretched Shibl dwell in tents, and most of them seem to have packed up and run away immediately after the event, so punishment is not easy ; but they'll have to surrender a quantity of weapons and pay a fairly handsome fine, partly by way of compensation for the wounded, according to tribal custom. The cause, however, lies rather deep, and is the relic of a pre-war fight ; the luckless Shibl were deceived and used by the Abu Sukhair people, who of course aren't within my jurisdiction, and I am going to make a hard fight to get them well punished too. The little affair has caused a lot of talk, and the sheikh who fell into the water (a good man called Hajji Humūd) is quite incredibly angry at the injury to his dignity : it must have been an awfully funny sight really.

As an example of a silly piece of trouble of a kind aroused daily by our double position as supporters of the tribal system and at the same time lovers of justice, here is a case which has given me some annoyance. I have one tract of land occupied by pieces of several tribes, who before my time were invited and compelled to elect a sheikh to themselves. This they did, and the choice fell on a respectable harmless little man called Ali al Hasan Agha, a loyal subject but not a strong character, and of no special family or warlike claims. However, there he is, and as sheikh has to be supported ; and on the whole he does his work better than many a bigger man. He came and complained that two of his sirkals (sub-headmen of sections) owed him trifling sums of money on account

of an old affair with Government ; they always delayed payment and insulted him, and this was not good for his honour and his authority. I called them both, and they indignantly denied, saying they had paid up their shares in full at the time. I should have let the matter drop at that, as there were no proofs or witnesses on either side : but Ali came again, and practically claimed damages for the insult involved in supposing him a liar. I said to both parties eventually that it was obvious some one was lying and there was no evidence ; that my experience of oaths was not very encouraging ; but in view of the position of Ali I would send the whole party to Karbala to swear by 'Abbas the famous oath which few like to perjure against wittingly. This thoroughly annoyed them all, as we send thieves and criminals to Karbala ; and they have gone off very much displeased with life, to return, I hope, in a suitably chastened frame of mind, when I propose to fine the liar 500 rupees.

To turn to more pleasing sidelights into the life of Irāq, here is a funny medley of religions and officialdom. There is a Sunni mosque here, built and maintained by the Turks ; of course all the public are Shi'ah, but we had to carry on the mosque, and the salary of the Imam or keeper is paid monthly by my Treasury, in return for which the call to prayer five times a day echoes unheeded at my front door. The Imam himself, therefore, is a Government servant, and as such has to ask my permission when he wants to go away. He has now been in Baghdad for two months on a lawsuit ; he went off after asking for leave, and it has now expired. Yesterday Azra, my wealthy Jew, received a letter from him from Baghdad asking a loan of fifty rupees in order that he might come back here and ask for an extension of leave from the (Christian) Hākim ! But of course a Sunni is much less fanatical than a Shi'ah.

I sat in Azra's garden with him yesterday, and afterwards dined with him. He gave me quite a pretty bouquet of flowers, little pink roses (very sweet scented), pomegranate flowers (a gorgeous scarlet), and a sort of lemon plant with a most fragrant leaf. . . . It was very sweet of you to send me the violets in your last letter,¹ and I wish

¹ Writing to Miss D. B. Wilson (June 11), Saumarez asks her to visit his mother at Bromley : ' You would see the garden, which I love very dearly.

I was at home to see them. This is certainly the time to be coming on leave.

Apart from my own little troubles, I am engaged in two most tedious disputes with my neighbours in Hillah and Diwaniyah. There seems no doubt that being absolutely on one's own and having a certain area in which one is able to act as one likes develops quarrelsomeness and intolerance; and I understand why in history provincial governors always quarrelled with one another and displayed nothing so clearly as their desire to break off from everyone else in all the war-won empires of history. . . .

So that I shan't be sorry, if, in spite of all, the Major thinks fit to send me off to Baghdad and settle up the account himself; but in his own interest, for I know what he's in for in the way of investigations, arguments, weeping women, and treacherous informers better than he does, I shall have to urge him strongly not to let me go.

To his father—

Umm al Ba'rur, April 20.—[After explaining the various reasons which had again prevented his going to Baghdad for the Arabic Proficiency Examination, he proceeds:] Major Norbury went back on Saturday [to Najaf] and I with him, returning here on Sunday. I found there was still further trouble about the dam, and resolved to act on my own. So early yesterday morning I embarked my available striking force, consisting of a corporal and eight policemen armed with rifles, and sailed down to the dam. As I expected, the mere news of my coming had dispersed all malcontents, and the dam was, to my great relief, wide open, with water pouring through it; some wretched women gathered on the bank and hooted and wailed, doubtless cursing me, but I think no further trouble is to be expected; so I re-embarked my gallant men, and back we came to lunch with the sheikh who was put into the water last week by the infuriated Shibl. This dam was closed by the Shibl in 1913; my tribe, the Humaidat (to which this sheikh belongs), thereupon turned out and fought a battle against the Fatlah, a powerful Abu Sukhair tribe who were backing the Shibl, as they are again to-day; the Humaidat had thirty-five killed and over seventy wounded, so it was quite a jolly little affair;

when the Turks stepped in, arrested most of the Fatlah (who thoroughly deserved it), and imprisoned their sheikhs in Baghdad. Hence the bitter feeling which makes our job so difficult ; but I have got the dam open with about seven not very serious casualties and one sheikh half drowned, and thank Heaven it isn't any worse. . . .

Apart from this incident, things are very much better, as the river has risen with a jump, and the water is almost all that could be desired. I spent an unpleasant morning clearing up troubles which had accumulated in my absence, but none of them were very irritating. I tried a murder charge and acquitted the accused, a boy of about sixteen, who, wonderful to relate, admitted the truth, which was that he was attacked by a thief in a house and fired in self-defence. Then I dealt with a claim by a man to a share in the inheritance of property on the ground that he was the brother of the present owner and son of their father ; which they flatly denied. As the father was dead and it might be a delicate matter to cross-examine the various mothers, and I could elicit no confirmation whatever of the petitioner's claim, I dismissed it. . . . Now I have to go and try a man for offering a bribe to my Town Clerk ! . . .

The Abu Sukhair people appealed about the dam to Major Norbury, so (Saumarez writes on April 26 to his mother) on April 24 the two, with four of the sheikhs of the Umm al Ba'rur district, embarked at Abu Shora on a river steamer, which the Arabs believed to be an armed vessel come to deport the sheikhs to Baghdad. The Abu Sukhair sheikhs were waiting at Umm Shuwārīf, half-way to Ghammas.

There [he writes] we landed, transhipped into canoes, inspected the dams, and I explained to the Major the whole case from my side. I was strongly backed up by the Irrigation Officer, a very able Sikh, and the head Arab revenue official of the division. We returned to Umm Shuwārīf and Major Norbury then assembled the sheikhs on both sides and very gently and politely, but quite firmly, adhered to his decision in my favour. . . .

My sheikhs were of course frightfully pleased, both on account of the welfare of their crops and also at the

scoring off their old enemies, who by keeping these dams closed for five years had reduced their wealth and strength very considerably. Umm al Ba'rur coffee shops were soon humming with a very highly exaggerated account of what occurred. . . . Marzūq, one of my sheikhs very much concerned in the business, a powerful man with a very deep hatred of the Fatlah, is said to have removed his headdress every two minutes and loudly ejaculated 'God prolong the life of our Hākim! (i.e. me); God give him victory,' etc., etc. Meanwhile I am hardly likely to receive a very cordial welcome in the Abu Sukhair district, but, as I never have occasion to go there, this will not greatly distress me. . . .

To Miss Barbara Smith—

Umm al Ba'rur, April 27.— . . . My district is a rice district, which means very extensive irrigation, consequently there are lots of date and fruit trees, peach, fig, mulberry, vine, and at the moment masses of pomegranates bearing a gorgeous red flower, and very much grass, with great swamp areas covered with reeds and small water flowers. The rivers and canals are thickly lined with willow and poplar; one that I sailed along to-day . . . might well have been the Cher at a point where an arch of this foliage hid for a moment the date palms standing behind.

Oh, it's a good country; not that I should ever be happy without a hill to look at, and that there is not for 300 miles; but the colours are marvellous, and the spring has been almost too beautiful, dare I say like a woman too perfectly made up. Anyway it's a very prosperous country, and when we get our prosaic roads and railways we shall see some very wonderful years. . . . I may add that apart from these things I want nothing more than a school here; and I look to your brother to find me one—indeed, I have already addressed him a communication on the subject. . . .

I can't tell you much about the children; they mostly run away when they see me coming, a legacy from Turkish times. They are happy little beggars, kindly treated by their parents, and exceedingly alive and gay up to



THE TAL'AH RAPIDS.
(The banks are of mud, not rock.)



SILT CLEARANCE : ARABS AT WORK.



about the age of ten, when they go right off and become very very dull. Small boys go about quite naked, and are in and out of the river all day in the summer, to my great envy; it is thought highly *infra dig.* for me to bathe, though I sometimes do.

During my hearing of a quarrel the other day between a sheikh and one of his relations, the latter said to him, 'Well, you are the father of the tribe, and you ought to,' etc., etc. 'No, no,' said the sheikh, 'the A.P.O. is our father, he is the father of the whole; and we are all his obedient children.' To-day I was hearing another similar dispute in which both sides were trying to make a very favourable impression. *A.* 'Let the A.P.O. decide; his intellect is more powerful than ours.' *B.* 'More powerful than ours! Why, as he has to govern all the people from Kifl to Shamiyah [forty miles] it must be that his intellect is more powerful than the intellects of all his subjects put together.' To such remarks I duly ejaculate 'Astaghfir Ullah,' which means literally 'I ask pardon of God,' and is the polite way of acknowledging a compliment, and wish I had someone with whom to laugh over these humours. . . .

To Lady Mary Murray—

Umm al Ba'rur, April 28.— . . . I don't think our administration here is very Imperialistic, and indeed I'm not allowed to fly a Union Jack even if I wished to, and if it wasn't that we never know what [certain financial magnates] have been manipulating in deals with the Government at home, we could honestly state that we are running the country solely in the interests of its people. . . .

I have been having a terrific time lately, and on two or three occasions longed to be able to run away and hide. At times one really dreads to go into the office, and for four hours or so on end to have a stream of plaintiffs and defendants, one saying, 'If this canal remains open, all my crops will be ruined, *but* I will obey your orders'; and the other, 'If this canal be closed I shan't get any crops at all, *but* I await your orders and will obey them'—and then one has to give one's orders!

To his sister—

Umm al Ba'rur, April 30.—After finishing this letter I'm going to draft a memo. on the introduction of representative government in Irāq, with remarks on methods of voting—a pretty hopeless subject:—and I am going at 5 P.M. to sit and drink tea with Azra at one of his gardens on the other side of the river. The dear old man is in great form at present, and has been rather done down at Najaf by an Arab official, presumably owing to personal feeling, and he is a little sore. We take a tax on all vegetables sold in a recognised market of one-fifth of sale price. Last year we collected it ourselves, and it amounted to about 80,000 Rs. This year we put the farm of the tax out to auction (we farm a number of the taxes, this being a less evil than the extreme corruption of our own officials) each market separately, and the bids had reached about 90,000 Rs. when Azra came to me and said he would like to bid for the whole of Shamiyah. I immediately sent him off to Najaf with a note, and a day or two later we drew up the conditions and published them about the country, in Hillah and Diwaniyah as well as here. The bidding went up marvellously, and reached 151,000 Rs., when it was knocked down to a Hillah man by collusion (apparently) with the Arab official who was running the auction, although Azra was prepared to go as far as 172,000 Rs. ! so he returned here naturally a little hurt.

From our point of view we've done very well, however. I estimated that we shouldn't get more than 120,000, a 50 per cent. increase on last year, which would have been creditable; 150,000 is nearly 100 per cent. on last year, and incidentally it means that our vegetables for this season will be worth about a million rupees, £100,000; as our population is probably well under 200,000, I think this augurs a good deal of prosperity. The Turks thought themselves lucky if they could raise £1000 in vegetable tax. . . .

The river is very high indeed; one bad breach has already occurred and is now being closed (I hope): my principal native official is away, taking his wife to hospital in Baghdad, and until he returns I don't like to move. When breaches occur one has to collect reeds and straw

from whoever is nearest, and if necessary to pull down the reed houses in the neighbourhood, in order to make a sort of mattress for the earth; if I sign the orders for these things myself there's very little trouble, but if not everybody comes and complains, and the work is delayed. Moreover, the principal sheikhs have all gone off on pilgrimage to Karbala, which makes quick action less easy.

However, everyone is highly excited at the good prospect for the rice harvest, and great sowing is in progress. I have endeavoured not to be too optimistic, and crops are always a very chancy business, but I am assured that there is a good hope of our realising 50,000 mesharas this year—about 30,000 acres. Last year we realised just over 20,000 mesharas. A meshara of rice may be worth anything from £5 to £15; if we take £8 as a safe figure, this gives a gross value of £400,000 and a Government share of £120,000, or 12 lakhs of rupees. If in fact we realise anything like this, I shall have handsomely fulfilled my claims to be able to double the wealth of the District in one year, and shall have acquired a great and quite undeserved reputation!

[Again pressing his sister to come out, he continues:] The longer you wait, the more Europeanised Irāq will become, whereas now, apart from the fact that the roads are safe and highway robbery, murder, and kidnapping are much more unusual than in England, it is very much as it was when Abraham moved up from Ur of the Chaldees. I hope to start the civilising process with two roads and a school even before next autumn, so I'm afraid anyhow you won't see Umm al Ba'rur in its real inaccessibility; but I don't think we shall have a hotel, a golf course, or even a picture palace, for a year or two.

Still, Western civilisation is coming on here. Two days ago my Town Clerk came and told me that all the owners of local boats had formed a combine, and had put up the fare from Umm al Ba'rur to Abu Shora from Rs. 4 to Rs. 10. I don't know whether I should call this a strike or a Trust, as they are really 'owner-drivers.' Anyway, after some negotiation (rather different in style from those conducted by Lord Askwith and such) in which we said we'd confiscate all their boats and run a passenger service at ten annas a head, we drew up a list of fares for

various journeys, making the Abu Shora trip five rupees. Like their brothers in Europe, they had chosen the psychological moment, as the water is too deep for any journeying on foot or horse to Najaf and beyond; and the pilgrimage was just coming on, so that all the pious were desiring boats to get up to Kufa and thence to Karbala.

There is a great cooing of ringdoves in these days, which sound is highly reminiscent of English country, and there is a man in Baghdad selling B.S.A. motorcycles, own brothers of Jerry. I could just do with two months in England now.

To Mr. Hubert Secretan—

Umm al Ba'rur, May 3.—I am plodding along at a job which requires the labours of at least three Englishmen and a greatly increased native staff as well. Consequently I am always overwhelmed with work, always having to drop promising schemes for lack of supervision, and apt to become very irritable indeed in dealing with the public. . . . [The production may increase over last year by 80 to 120 per cent., but] we may get little or no increase, and then many of my loans may prove irrecoverable. It all depends on the floods, which are not as yet susceptible of control by mortal hands. However, I believe on the whole the people are fairly confident, a bit anxious, and very liable in consequence to quarrel with their neighbours, but nothing very serious. Living absolutely in touch with them all the time, one loses all sense of proportion, and because one man comes and says he's been flooded, one thinks the whole district must be in an equally bad way.

To his father—

Umm al Ba'rur, May 2.— . . . I had an amusing interlude yesterday, when my Town Clerk came and reported that a horrible tragedy was occurring. A man had duly divorced his old wife, having previously taken on a new one, quite a young girl; at the same time his son's wife was staying in the house. The latter had made common cause with the divorcée; the divorcée refused to leave the house, attacked the former husband, and was cruelly

beating the new young wife, whose screams were such that a neighbouring Jew had created a sensation in the coffee shop by telling the public that they were renegade Muslims to allow such a thing. The husband had been attacked, scratched, and thrown out when he tried to get into the house. So I had to order the Town Clerk to collect three or four leading citizens, and in the name of the Government to demand that the little new wife be handed over to her father until such time as the divorcée could be prevailed upon to move. He was rather frightened, but it worked all right, and there is peace for the moment !

To his mother—

Umm al Ba'rur, May 7.— . . . I much doubt if I shall be left in District work after the close of this year. But, granting that all depends upon circumstances maturing nine months hence, my fixed intention is to see part of the spring and summer of 1921 in England with you, and nowhere else ; and when I think of Oxford as it must be at this minute and was a year ago (with Jerry especially) I mildly wonder at the impulses which drove me to this life of toil and care, instead of accepting Dewhurst's warm appeal that I should stay on and read Oriental languages, or the suggestions that I should follow M.'s example.¹ But I certainly don't regret it. . . .

How people can frame theories for the settlement of the late Turkish Empire on International Control sanctioned by the League of Nations here and now, this beats me. I don't blame anyone for knowing nothing whatever about Arabs and Kurds and Nestorians and Chaldeans and Armenians, and I will let them bleat as much as they wish about the national emotions, histories, and traditions, of these jolly people ; but they are criminally responsible for gross negligence in not considering facts under their own eyes, of which the most obvious is that America is out of it, and the next that, with the best will in the world, you cannot in one minute produce an international police all armed and equipped and loyal to an idea embodied by the Council of the League under Mr. Balfour

¹ Take college work in Oxford.

with a total staff (so far as is known) consisting of one Head Clerk at £10,000 a year, Sir Eric Drummond. I'm as much a Leaguer as anyone; but I wouldn't care to govern my district without a force in the background somewhere; why should my people, who have been murdering and plundering for the 600 years of Turkish rule until the beginning of 1918, suddenly change their spots and become law-abiding? The answer is, of course, because there's a strong Government, i.e. the roads are safe, and criminals are very often arrested: which is more than you can say of Ireland at present. You must not infer that I am advocating frightfulness; I don't imagine you will accuse me of this, and I don't think I am the terror of my people; but also you must not suppose that frightfulness has ever been necessary, or has been adopted by the Civil Administration here.

But when I read of amiable proposals for European advisers, backed by nothing, to constitute straight away a series of republics from Basrah to Galata and (excluding Persia) to the Caspian, I would like to shew these people a few things here. Up to 1917 it is reckoned that normally tribal disputes on the Euphrates from near Baghdad to Basrah meant 5000 men killed per year: this is of course exaggerated; but now there aren't any. Five years ago one couldn't go from here to Diwaniyah (twenty miles) without an armed escort: Azra, with five armed men, was attacked and robbed of £50; and the more unpopular sheikhs never moved at all without a bodyguard of fifty mounted riflemen. Is the reversal of all these things, and the establishment of a Pax Britannica, *per se* a good thing or not? Ask the poor cultivator.

That's why I hope you aren't signing any documents about Armenia; because paper pledges without an army are quite useless. Of course if the British Public is prepared to embark on a big military occupation of Armenia lasting an indefinite time, and France, Italy, and the rest are prepared to allow it, the problem can undoubtedly be tackled; but this means probably another £50,000,000 on the Budget every year, more men, etc., etc., and is, I'm sure, impossible. When, therefore, anybody calls on the British nation to pledge the independence of Armenia or anyone else, it is as well to remember that the

Allies can't go on for ever with new military commitments, and that, if we start trying to break Mustafa Kemal, there are lots more freebooting ex-Turkish generals wandering about behind him, a large mass of militarist Bolshevism at Tashkend doing a lot of trouble-making in Afghanistan and Persia, and also a pretty thorny Arab Nationalist movement in Syria; all of which would love to have a go at the British. If one is prepared to take all this on, well and good; if not, it's a pity to go on making classic utterances on the subject which can only become scraps of paper.

Forgive this outburst, and don't accuse me of becoming altogether an apostle of *Real-Politik*. I can only say candidly that I don't care one scrap for the extension of government *qua* British, and I shall always work for building up a national indigenous government here or elsewhere. Only, you can't start the job by sympathy and good advice; you must from the start have power to enforce your advice.

I duly prosecuted the sheikh belonging to Abu Sukhair yesterday, and the Major fined him £T200, greatly to his relief, for he thought he was going to be sent to prison. He made a miserable defence, and showed himself up for a thorough wrong 'un. He is a very rich man, so it doesn't hurt him: I think it might well have been a larger sum. . . .

It has been seen that contact at first hand with the problems of administration had modified the academic liberalism in which Saumarez had grown up. In February he had been moved to protest to the *Nation* against its treatment of Middle East problems, and had sent the letter to Professor Gilbert Murray to send on at his option. It was published in the *Nation* of April 10, and was instantly recognised as his work by his parents; and in due course it reached Baghdad and attracted the attention of the authorities there. From his description of his surroundings they guessed the authorship, and it was regarded in official circles in Mesopotamia as an able statement of the difficulties of the situation, and as likely to lead to his speedy transfer to special work at Baghdad.

THE FUTURE OF MESOPOTAMIA

SIR,—I live alone in a remote corner of the world, which needs no particularizing other than that it was lately part of the Turkish Empire. For the working hours of the day I talk dog-Arabic; I live a good deal in the houses of my sheikhs, and I issue orders on every conceivable subject connected with Government. For practical purposes, indeed, I am the Government: a position often ridiculous and often embarrassing, but remarkably illuminating.

To be a governor is, as Sancho proved, hard work. Living alone, however, with no Englishman within reach, there is time to think, and much cause. The affairs of Europe become known to me by means of the weekly *Times*, which doesn't matter, and the *Nation*, which does; these, borne by an erratic postman through floods and rivers, arrive more or less irregularly, and often wet.

That on the strength of the above introduction I should offer any remarks on things Eastern is perhaps impertinent, and still more so that I should lay down theories of government. Still, a year ago I was writing college essays upon the Will of the People and Natural Law; reading what I could of the theorists, and theorizing in their footsteps.

Such is my excuse for calling attention to two errors, which, in my opinion, make worthless almost everything that has appeared lately in your columns on the subject of the late Turkish Empire. I have read the *Nation* for several years regularly, and I am devoted to it largely because I often disagree with its remedies, and almost always share its ideals. But you are at present endangering your good influence by countenancing these two errors, which are not familiar to the dweller in civilized countries, and for this reason are inexcusable in those who profess to guide him.

The first error is to gloss over the fact that in the long run the success of any Government depends on its power to compel. That in time it may be possible to produce a real democracy I am not disputing, nor yet attempting to discuss in what the force must lie: I merely state the

self-evident fact that a Government which cannot get its orders carried out is doomed.

Now, sir, the force with which I govern my somewhat unruly subjects consists of thirty-six thoroughly unreliable native police: yet my orders are always carried out. Why? Ultimately because the British Army lurks in the background of the local mind; and although the troops are a long way off and not plentiful, still they are a legend among the natives.

You, sir, and your correspondents want to see 'national aspirations gratified,' the recognition of the 'unity of the Arab race,' the establishment of responsible Arab government, and the absolute prevention of any further additions to the already overweighted British Empire. So do I, and it is just for this reason that I want you not to allow this slipshod thinking, and to make it clear, as it has never (to my knowledge) been made clear, that progress on such lines is a matter of extraordinary difficulty, and that theory, alike with history, gives no help in solving a problem which has never yet been attempted. The problem is, of course, how to provide a native Government with the force required to govern a wild and very mixed race, divided by the bitterest religious hostilities and tribal feuds, and containing in its midst also colonies of fiercely hated Jews and Christians. Once stated, the problem needs no enlargement from me: that you allow your correspondents to proceed airily in the assumption (as you did yourself when discussing the Persian agreement) that if left alone these people could govern themselves and freely employ European advisers, is almost Tolstoyan in its view of human nature.

Secondly, and this is purely a question of experience and local knowledge, you do not know the Arab. My own knowledge is very limited, and is mostly confined to the very small district which I know rather intimately. The points that matter in this connection are four:

(1) We are dealing with people who have lost all consciousness of nationality in the political sense, who have from time immemorial been governed by foreigners, and among whom indeed the very word 'Arab' is used scornfully.

(2) These people are utterly unvocal, like all



uneducated masses, and it is impossible to find out at all what they think about government. We deal with them largely in the mass, through their sheikhs, and the sheikh's view of government is an objectionable means of extracting money. It is a hard fact that to the local taxpayer a native government means nothing except remission of all taxes; for he at least is not credulous of the ability of a native government to collect these.

(3) Besides the complication of extreme religious bitternesses, the tribal system has produced innumerable disruptions which may be incurable, or if curable will need several generations for the purpose. The desert tribe is always longing to fall upon the settled cultivating tribe and exact ransom from it; one cultivating tribe is always at loggerheads with the next about water-rights, etc., and so the tale goes on. Amid all these tiny subdivisions there is no unifying principle from within.

(4) We are working against an overwhelming stream of propaganda. The people behind this, after making due allowances for mischief-makers, dismissed Turkish employees and foreigners, are sincere enough. But they are not constructive: no man can build without bricks, and they at least know enough about the facts I have briefly mentioned to realize that the Arab cannot be ruled at present by himself. The point, however, rather is that they are all city men, knowing incredibly little of the country districts, and universally distrusted by the tribesmen, who form the vast mass of the population, and who are voiceless.

There are many other points, but these are salient. I have been moved to set them out after reading your issue of January 17, just arrived, containing a letter about Syria, signed Mid-East, an article on Mandates in the Middle East, and more especially some sentences in the article entitled 'The Coming of Peace.'

Mid-East closes his letter by the suggestion that Abdullah be set up as Amir in Baghdad with a national government under him. Leaving aside all the incidental difficulties, let us imagine this arrangement working, with European advisers. All the officials would be corrupt: there is in existence no native army, or even police: and can the knot be cut by giving him a European force

to assert his authority ? I do not say this is impossible ; if an Arab government were set up to-morrow, and it would accept my services, I would try with all my heart to work under it ; all I want you to tell your public is that any such arrangement bristles with difficulties and has never yet been even remotely foreshadowed in actual fact since the beginning of history.

But with your article on 'The Coming of Peace' I have less patience. You wish to see the extension of cultural autonomy : my people saw it here five years ago, and we are not anxious to repeat the experiment. During the war there was here an interregnum, after the Turks withdrew and before our occupation became effective. What happened ? On the stretch of twenty miles of river where I live, no less than seven different tribes took a toll from every boat that went up or down the river, as it entered the territory of each. This is, quite bluntly, what cultural 'autonomy' means to the Arab, namely the right to strip the foreigner ; and the foreigner is the man in the next tribe.

I believe that we can build up an Arab Government ; I think it is a task of extreme difficulty and profoundly worth attempting ; but I am sure that you must give us time. We shall pay for it by being occasionally murdered ; and you at home will have to endure taunts of Imperialism, perfidy, and the like. If you insist on turning us out you will let loose incalculable forces of destruction.

Yours, etc.,
MULLA.

[We have never proposed to 'set up' an Arab Government 'to-morrow.'—ED., *Nation*.]

He took much the same line in a letter to his mother, Umm al Ba'rur, May 20. After commenting adversely on Press criticisms of British rule in Mesopotamia, and admitting that 'the economy issues and the question of military commitments are immensely serious,' he complains that these criticisms, 'with their fatuities about international guarantees and advisers and nationalism [are] working up suspicion against our whole position in the Middle East and India, and incidentally encouraging

our propagandists, who are not nearly such whole-hearted, high-minded gentlemen as might be wished for. I could let go at great length about the silly article on the Mosul oil and the gross use of the word 'exploitation' to cover what anyone except an incurable romantic would call 'development.' Am I 'exploiting' my tribes when I make them build roads and canals and floodbanks without pay in order to increase revenue?

Of course [certain financial magnates] are immensely dangerous. None of us know what their relations are with the Home Government. The only way to deal with them is to strengthen the Labour Party and put, e.g., Robert Cecil in the F.O. But this doesn't influence the simple fact that we must either clear out now, lock, stock and barrel, or else be left to work out at our leisure the problem of what a mandate can really be made to mean, for the whole crux of the question is that nobody knows, for no one has ever tried it before: which was the point of my letter. . . .

I am afraid you are perhaps worrying about the remark in the *Nation* letter that 'we shall occasionally be murdered.' This applies, of course, almost solely to the Northern frontier, but you can't have cakes without breaking eggs, and you certainly can't start in to substitute law and order for anarchy without a certain risk. But in these parts the risk is now very small and is likely to diminish enormously as prosperity increases. . . .

He expressed his views more fully in a letter to Professor Gilbert Murray, May 21:

. . . When did we grab Mesopotamia? If you refer to our war policy and maintain that we never ought to have sent a force here at all, I think that is an arguable case. But I don't gather that that is what you mean. If then you mean that at the conclusion of the war we ought to have cleared out altogether and waited to be asked back, I totally disagree. If we clear out we must clear out for good and all. I think there's a very great deal to be said for clearing out altogether, mainly on the ground of expense and military commitments; and I would gladly argue this case absolutely fairly. Only if we do that, the

country goes straight to ruin far worse than under the Turk: Persia follows suit, and there is a strong chance of a further bust-up. That this would occur is absolutely incontestable. I don't know that, on the whole, it is so terrible as might seem to one on the spot. Irāq contains less than 3,000,000 people—not very many to leave stewing in their own juice, and Persia has always been in a pretty mess. I do suggest, though, that there is something to be said for good government *per se*, and that, when you do get a chance to restore the prosperity of a great and ruined section of the world, there are some arguments for doing that.

Secondly, what is exploitation, and what are the old Empire-building habits? I should have said that the features one wanted to eliminate or make impossible are (1) the alienation of land from the natives to Europeans; (2) conscription of natives; (3) making the native revenue contribute to the revenues of the occupying Power. The first and second of these are unthinkable in Irāq; the third is not conceivable for a great many years, as the cost of administration and defence will be very heavy for some time.

I agree that silly things have been said about the oil and wheat. The latter, however, is to my mind beside the point. The Arab is going to get the price of the increased crops, and it seems to me the more wheat there is in the world the better. It is the League of Nations' job to deal with Preference, and Protection is a world-problem. Oil is rather different, because it appears in barren lands and can't be exploited by the Arab. Further, the oil interests in England and America are very dangerous. (We had an American in at Najaf one day prospecting for the Standard Oil Co.; his manners were not of the best, and he talked vigorously about Free and Fair Trade!) But it's certain, at all events, that someone's going to develop this oil, and until you internationalise the whole of the world's trade under the League, I suppose you will always have trouble with Trusts, etc. It is not the case that we occupied Mosul in order to get at the oil area: we occupied Mosul to hit the Turk. I do not think that any political or military officer cares a blow who gets the wells as long as we get a decent

frontier which doesn't break up tribal and other divisions; and I have seen a lot of correspondence with the Home Government which certainly the *Nation* would approve of, and not a word of exploitation about it. Of course, one doesn't know what devilish compacts [certain financial magnates] have made with Lloyd George or Churchill; but I trust our Wilson to beat them.

I don't know what you think about Zionism and our Palestine affairs. I shall not be revealing any secrets, though, if I say that that adventure appears here to have caused far more of the trouble in Syria and elsewhere than our occupation of Irāq.

Now about the troops (1) . . . There is very strong evidence that our original coming was exceedingly welcome. (2) At the present time I can, of course, only speak of my own district, and I am prepared to take any oath that the people are tremendously grateful for the existence of our Government here, and would regard its departure as a supreme disaster. I *know* this is so, and I do know Shamiyah pretty well. To set this out in full and show why the Government is liked and why disliked would take a long essay, but I daresay you'll take my word for it. Baghdad and the two holy cities are of course different and very difficult, and they need two further essays. But the troops are *not* used as police, and are not kept here for that purpose; they are here because of the frontier situation, and that situation is due to causes entirely beyond the control of anyone, but it could have been alleviated by America. We have nothing whatever to fear from the people of Irāq beyond occasional tribal squabbles and a little fanaticism in the holy cities, in which very soon the only Englishman will be the doctor.

. . . There is no alternative whatever between complete withdrawal and a progressive effort to build up, under the mandate, a native constitution. The success of this depends, first on the integrity of the Home Government, and second on the reality of the League. The latter obviously doesn't exist until Germany, Austria, and Russia come in, and I don't see much difference between taking a mandate from the present body and taking it from the Supreme Council.

Finally, is to be hated always a proof of guilt; and

does the Press matter so very much? I wonder if we have really got so many enemies, outside the professionals?

The inconsistency of your letter comes in the tail. Why *must* we take the South African colonies? Surely they can be internationalised far more easily than this country, or, alternatively, we can withdraw without shaking the whole of Asia.

Yes, it is all a tragedy. But we'll beat the oil people yet. I wish you could come and talk to my people; you would love them so.

To return to the affairs of Eastern Shamiyah, Saumarez writes to his father:

Umm al Ba'rur, May 14.—The river has started going down, so there is no longer much anxiety about banks and breaches. The early rice is up: the fields are the most curious feathery shade of green. I saw a whole lot yesterday which looks in splendid condition and is all on land which last year was barren, so I began to feel my reward for the efforts of the past. The sight of the growing crop has a most magical effect on the tribes, who are full of hope and confidence.¹

Yesterday I had a most touching and unexpected honour in the form of an address presented by the townspeople, thanking me for having built the great bund round the town, which has proved very effective, and made a great difference to their health. It is an amusing document, but very badly written, and I have not had a chance to read it properly yet. It was presented to me by the Town Clerk, who worded their gratitude most overwhelmingly, and had been instructed to request that I would forward it to the Higher Authorities, otherwise they would write another one and present it to Major Norbury.

¹ Of the rice crop he writes to an old friend of his father's, Mr. F. E. de St. Dalmas (May 22): 'It is grown entirely on silt; when the flood comes down the water is carefully let on to the land; the silt settles and the clear water is then drained off. In this way you get a bed of silt as much as a foot thick, for the water is very heavily charged with the silt of the mountains of Asia Minor, and it acts like a cushion on the stubble of last year, which is not ploughed, killing weeds by smothering them, and producing a beautiful smooth tilth. It gives a yield per acre from three to five times that of wheat and barley; it is also the staple food of the country, and the merchant's price (for the exportable surplus, which is very large) is about five times what it was before the war.'

In the letter of May 20 (p. 261) he says:

I have been eight continuous days touring in my canoe, and have covered about 150 miles or rather more. Fortunately the weather has been cooler, with a little breeze, and I have seldom eaten larger Arab meals or thriven more on them. . . . The last two days I spent in going round a great part of the land put newly under rice this year. The early crop is now about four inches high, and is a most wonderful shade of light green; it is altogether a most joyful sight; and the people who have had no rice and wretched other crops since 1914 are tremendously happy and full of gratitude to Providence and me! As Hākīm, one gets lumped with Ullah in a way which would almost satisfy the Kaiser!

As a result of what I saw I am inclined to believe that it is possible my district may grow 50,000 mesharas of rice this year (a meshara is five-eighths of an acre). Rice sowing goes on until the end of July, and it is quite impossible to get an accurate estimate till then: but the above figure seems quite conceivable. Last year we had just 20,000. It is very easy to write down these figures, but they take a lot of realising, for rice to the Arab is almost like beef to the English farmer. So if we can double the crop in one year we double trade, improve the food supply, double our own revenues, and, in addition, attract back a large amount of cultivators who in the five lean years went off to other places, and thus strengthen some important tribes and lay a foundation for future great increases. The future is in some ways the most exciting part of all. If I were left here for another two years, and given up to a lakh of rupees each year for developments, I reckon that this district in the financial year 1922-23 would produce (short of flood disasters) 40,000 tons rice, 5000 tons wheat and barley, 15,000 tons dates, and a very large quantity of vegetables, fruit, and small grains (millet, beans, etc.); bringing in a Government revenue of anything from 18 to 20 lakhs. Not bad for a population of 40,000 all told. And one could count on a yearly increase of 10 to 20 per cent. for some time after that. I don't suppose, however, that I shall be left here so long, and my successor will take about a year to appreciate the possible developments, besides

which I don't expect he'll know as much Arabic as I do. I think I shall put in a strong plea to be left here until next spring, when I hope for leave, and tell Colonel Wilson that if he lets me stay here till then I will guarantee an increase of 30 per cent. on this year's revenue, which I hope may touch 13 lakhs (it was 8½ last year).

To-day is the first of the sacred month Ramadhan, a very trying month for the Arab, and rather a holiday for me. No food or drink may pass the lips between sunrise and sunset, nor may tobacco be smoked; in consequence the two meals of the Arab are eaten at sunset and about 3 A.M. and the day is mostly passed in sleep. So no work goes on in the office in the morning. We start in there at 4 in the afternoon. Also my touring is very much restricted, as I refuse to sit in a madhif and be given food and drink in the middle of the day while everyone around me has to fast, and most of them are half asleep. I yesterday signed a notice to the townspeople beginning 'Truly the month Ramadhan is the most excellent of all months' telling them how to behave, and instructing Jews and other religions not to smoke in the streets; I am afraid I may forget this ordinance myself.

This hot weather the fast is an awful strain on the public, particularly in respect of water, and no doubt many of them don't keep it very strictly in their own homes. Muhámmad instituted it in the winter, but as his year contains only 354 days, it moves completely round the calendar every thirty-two years or so. . . .

. . . On the whole I wouldn't say that the ethics of the Qu'ran do less to modify the life of the Arab than those of Christianity do the Englishman. What I would say is, of course, that the ritual side has an infinitely greater influence. It is intellectually a magnificent sight, this Islamic discipline—people suddenly breaking off a conversation in the madhif and getting out in the middle and saying their prayers; the call to prayer from the mosques; this Ramadhan fast, etc. Speaking as a Hākim, I haven't yet made up my mind whether it is a good thing or not; it is certainly dangerous in the hands of scoundrels; but it is incomparably better than e.g. theosophy, and I think than pure materialism. I don't feel clear about it yet, though.

A final point is that, in spite of what I have written about Najaf's holy men, Islam does produce real saints. . . .

You may remember my writing of a sheikh called Hajji Juwad. He died two days ago, and to my amazement I find he was about seventy. I seem to be the only person in Shamiyah who regrets his decease, for he was fabulously rich, and mean to the last degree.¹ He was loathed by all his relatives, and the problem of appointing his successor is worrying me a lot. His eldest son has just been in to see me, an unpleasant youth with a bad reputation, who could do nothing but say, 'You liked my father, please God you will like me even better: I have no one to help me but God and yourself.' I promised to attend the memorial celebrations in two days' time: and meanwhile I shall have to decide whom to appoint as sheikh. It doesn't necessarily go to the eldest son; normally the chief men of the tribe elect their sheikh. But in this case there are very bitter internal feuds due to old Hajji's meanness, and I don't see any prospect of securing a majority for anyone. I did like Hajji myself, although I knew of his meanness, because he generally told me the truth and gave me a great deal more support and assistance than some of his more popular neighbours. . . .

To Lady Mary Murray—

Umm al Ba'rur, May 24.—I should have used Sunday for its proper privilege of writing to you, had not we been affected by a sudden burst of heat, which was, I think, the worst I have yet had. It came on about 5 P.M., bringing swarms of minute insects which could not be discouraged from sharing my dinner, and got steadily worse, with great thunderclouds, until about half-past nine; when I decided that one could only lie on one's bed and pant. I had just undressed when I heard a noise coming up from the South very like an express train or a very large shell, a most alarming sound in fact: for the moment I wondered whether the river was going to leap out of its bed, or what else could be the explanation.

¹ In a letter to Mrs. Herapath, Saumarez writes, apropos of Hajji Juwad's death, that 'the lack of hospitality is for Arabs the greatest of crimes, equivalent, say, to cold-blooded murder in England.'

There wasn't long to wait, however; it was a solitary gust of a hurricane, come full of sand and burning dust straight out of the great desert, which is only ten miles away; for five minutes the house rocked, the palm trees screamed and bellowed (but they are very tough), and the people of the town vented their alarm with much wailing of women. In ten minutes all was quiet; but I regret to say rather hotter if anything, and such is the dust storm of the desert. I shouldn't care to meet it out in the open. But a little before dawn the north wind rose, and to-day is cooler and quite bearable, though it will be hot before it has finished with us. I have at last been compelled to move downstairs to my dark and gloomy dining-room, which I abandoned in December for a new and bright little room upstairs. The latter is now too hot: the walls and roof of the house simply soak-in the sun, and the lower room is several degrees cooler, besides containing a punkah, for the service of which I must now engage a small boy. I don't like overhead punkahs, for they blow all my papers about, and I hate small boys about the house; but it enables one to write in the middle of the day, and also to sleep, which isn't a bad way of passing the hot hours, especially if you get up at 5.30 A.M. (which at present I don't, but mean to).

. . . I am attacking Persian again quite industriously, and find it is almost exactly three years to the day since I started playing with it. It is a pleasant language and absurdly easy, but one wants a teacher to learn to talk, and also, as no sensible grammar and key exists, to correct one's exercises. I have some idea of asking for a fortnight's holiday in Persia in July, and would like to be able to talk a bit.

. . . Thank you also for Keynes's book, which duly arrived about ten days ago. It is well written and devastating, but one is hardly in a position to criticise either its arguments or its proposals. Do other people (intelligent people, I mean) who were at Paris take the same view of the President? If Keynes's picture of him is even partially true (which I am perfectly certain it isn't) he seems to me to be the villain of the piece much more than Lloyd George or Clémenceau. Of the character of the terms, however, I suppose there can be no question: the

book puts it very clearly. I personally feel that Hardy's mood in the *Dynasts* is the only way to approach the personalities of the war and of the peace, and as for taking any practical steps to remedy these ghastly errors, it doesn't seem to me very hopeful to say that the indispensable preliminary is a change of government all round, however true that is. In fact there don't seem to be any outlets for honest idealism anywhere: and when I console myself by thinking that in my work here I am first of all working for the good of the people, the *Nation* breaks rudely in and says my only object, conscious or unconscious, is oil. I daresay it's true, but one must preserve a few illusions, not having a garden to dig in, trees to cut down, or a piano to play on.

To Miss Barbara Smith—

Umm al Ba'rur, May 25.—I find it is a whole fortnight since the books came, and must apologise for my delay in replying. I really can't tell you how welcome they are. I had read all my library through twice, and was starting on the third attempt—except indeed my Arabic and Persian books, which require more concentration than I care to give on a hot afternoon! I had read neither of the books you sent, and have been enjoying them immensely; please accept my sincerest thanks for a pleasure the magnitude of which I think you can hardly imagine.

I haven't yet finished Inge ['*Outspoken Essays*']; I had never read anything of him before, and had vaguely supposed that his title of '*Gloomy*' was a journalese folly: I rather think it's justified, however, and I violently disagreed with most of the introductory essay on present discontents; indeed, I felt almost disposed to write an argumentative reply, hot though it was. But he's none the worse reading for being highly controversial, and he certainly knows how to write.

The other book is one of the most amazing stories in the world ['*The Road to Endor*']. . . . I never read a better story of cleverness and courage; they were an amazing and heroic pair, and one longs to know Hill intimately. What a masterly figure he is, with his Bible. The whole tale is so incredible as to be obviously true; and the presenting of it is excellent.

Have you any views on the morality of the whole proceeding? I can't classify mine. I seem to have three quite irreconcilable 'principles' (or prejudices) about escaping, and I cannot find any reason for justifying one at the expense of the others when they clash, as they nearly always would. They are (1) That a prisoner is bound to look for, make, or seize any opportunity of escape which gives him a dog's chance. This would vary enormously with different men (for physical reasons largely) but is, I think, intelligible; (2) That a man is not entitled in the interest of his own liberty to risk the safety of his fellow-prisoners. I am not sure how far this goes; (3) That it's a bad thing to deceive anyone, even a Moïse or a Kiamil.

To his father—

Umm al Ba'rur, May 25.—As for the oil, I don't know much about it. The great Anglo-Persian works are of course at Abadan, below Basrah (mouth of the Shatt al Arab), and the crude stuff comes down the pipe line from Persia. There are wells, worked in a primitive way by a few Arabs, near Mosul, and I believe some people think there is a lot of oil in other places much nearer Baghdad, but never tapped as yet. The amount of oil got at present by Arabs is of course insignificant. . . . Oil wells seem to be found mostly in barren and depopulated areas and require big capital to exploit them. I sympathise with the *Nation* to the extent that I regard commercial exploitation anywhere with strong suspicion, and I think the relations of members of the Cabinet with [certain oil interests] are exceedingly dangerous, because of the considerations of self-interest which they impart into purely political problems, more especially in time of war. But as nothing is more certain than that the world is going to exploit oil and such commodities, and that the development of means of transport and all scientific advance seems to be more in the nature of an inevitable 'cosmic process' than just a phase of modern western industrialism, I don't see what's to be done about it except to watch the game as closely as possible and fight the profiteer whenever one gets a chance. I don't really know how much accurate

surveying of the mineral resources of Irāq has been done, but I fancy much less than you might suppose. . . .

The last three days have been excessively hot, and the strain on my fasting people is very severe, besides being bad for their health, not to mention their tempers. But, as they say when I commiserate with them, 'What can we do about it?' As it seems probable (from the point of view of a highly sceptical reader of history) that world-conditions from now onward are not likely to admit the success of the Mahdi to whose coming they look, and for whom the fabulous treasures of the shrines of Najaf, Karbala, and elsewhere are heaped up (whole vaults, they say, bricked up for years and never to be entered till the great day, crammed with gold and jewels, largely from India), it seems likely that they will have to go on fasting in Ramadhan until the end of time, for there exists no mechanism for modifying the ordinances of the Prophet, and I don't think Islam is likely to lose its hold on the imagination of dwellers in the 'heat-belt.' I think it will almost certainly be reformed from within on the lines of a return to the normal teaching of the Qu'ran, which will be all to the good; but that won't affect the sacred observances laid down by the Prophet himself.

As regards your question about photographs¹ I don't think there is any religious feeling on the subject here. In some respects Shi'ahs are more tolerant than Sunnis, and Persian tapestries have been weaving the pictures of Laila and Majnun, the lovers of Arab legend, for quite a thousand years. The Wahhabi keeps up the prejudice in addition to his condemnation of silk and tobacco; but that desert frenzy would never succeed in the more luxurious and complicated life of Irāq. The history of Islam is an extraordinarily clear study of the aberrations of the human mind, and is, from this point of view, deserving of a new and learned book, which I shall never have the knowledge or energy to write.

I am enjoying my leisurely Ramadhan mornings, due to the absence of the office staff for their sleep till 3.30 P.M., though when I go to the office at 3.30 P.M. it is so hot that

¹ His father had asked if Muslims regarded them as prohibited by the Second Commandment.



MAIN GATE, MOSQUE OF 'ALI, NAJAF.

(The work is coloured tiles, covered with extracts from the Qur'an.)

my temper is almost as bad as theirs. I am trying to learn Persian again, but have got to the point where I require an intelligent teacher, i.e. a Persian with some knowledge of grammar and good Arabic. . . . My study of this language and of Arabic has given me some ideas on the Classics, but I am not quite sure what they are. I think, however, that the following is a fair summary.

(1) You don't begin to know a language until you speak it fluently. (2) You can only learn this by a short intensive spell at its grammar, followed by constant talking—written exercises and literature help very little. (3) The value, therefore, of learning to read and write good prose, and still more verse, is more a question of what value is given to language as a mental gymnastic and to literature as an art in itself, than a question of opening up to oneself a new world by the acquisition of a new key. In other words, I think the lock requires to be picked. . . . Still, I do enjoy learning languages a great deal more than most people, and I think I find it a good deal easier.

To his sister—

Umm al Ba'rur, May 27.— . . . 'Clarté' is very well worth reading: I read it for the second time the other day, and think now that most of its philosophy is wrong, but it is a brilliant study of the confusion war causes in the mind of the soldier as well as in the face of nature. . . .

I went two nights ago to stay with a sheikh called Marzuq, who for five years has had no rice and wretched other crops, and this year looks like having a really magnificent crop of rice. . . . He is an interesting character, in the past very greatly feared and hated by other tribes, a hard fighter with a tremendous reputation for personal courage, and a leader whom his tribe would follow anywhere. He is in many ways a thorough child and a very attractive one, immensely unreliable in small things, but not, I fancy, in big. My two predecessors (neither of them English) were very wrongly prejudiced against him by their Arab advisers, local men who had in view other interests, and they did him a good deal of harm and made him thoroughly discontented with the British Government. Now, however, he is very enthusiastic in its favour, and, as an Arab always

speaks and thinks in superlatives, he expresses his feelings in most amusing and rather embarrassing terms. . . . So when I went to see him after dinner, they all started in to praise the present régime, and the peace and prosperity which they saw were its only objects, etc., etc. Then my Mamur (an admirable Kurd, of whom I am very fond indeed) started saying they all hoped I should soon become a Major and prosper, etc., etc., when Marzuq broke in and said he hoped I should never become a Major or be promoted, because then I should be transferred, and he was certain that there were no other Hâkims like me to take my place. This was the highest compliment, I think, I have ever had paid me, for it was obviously sincere at the moment when it was uttered, though doubtless he will be at the other extreme if I have to do something he doesn't like. An almost entirely personal system of government does, of course, put too much power into the hands of a Hâkim, not merely if he's unscrupulous, which I don't think many Englishmen are, but if he is ignorant of the language or careless of investigations, or (as one can hardly help being) prejudiced, however slightly, in one's personal likes or dislikes : but it's very difficult to see what checks and balances can be introduced without making the Hâkim's position impossible.

. . . A welcome feature of touring in Ramadhan is that one gets one's dinner sharp at sunset, i.e. 7.30 P.M., instead of having to wait till 9 or 10. The people are really suffering very much, owing to the heat, and they bear it most heroically. The other day with Marzuq, about 7.15, when the sun actually disappeared, there was a great cloudbank, so it was impossible to tell the exact minute at which the fast could be broken. Watches were consulted and all proved different. I assured them (rightly) that the sun had set, but after discussion they decided to wait another ten minutes to be on the safe side. As they had touched no liquid since 5 A.M., I thought this pretty magnificent. The first week is over and they are beginning to get used to it, but their faces show very marked signs of it, and they say by about 5 P.M. the eyes no longer see, the ears no longer hear, and often there is a dizziness when they stand up. . . .

. . . I'm sorry not to have heard as yet that you have

started learning to ride a horse and to talk Arabic. I think you are making a great mistake in refusing my advice to come this winter. You will have no difficulty about a passport, and a passage can always be got if you make enough fuss. . . . As for the money, I don't think it could be better spent; and if you came this year you would see a sight which will be growing civilised, and I am afraid vulgarised, in a very few years, but is at present worth fifty treatises on ethnology, history, and morals.

The attitude of the Arabs to modern improvements is shown by a letter from Saumarez to his aunt, Mrs. Hera-path, written on May 23 :

. . . One of my sheikhs has just returned from a full pilgrimage of the four holy cities, Najaf, Karbala, Kadhimain, and Samarra. Before the war his journey would have taken about ten days each way going fast, and would have cost a great deal in horses and rest houses, etc. Now he could do nearly the whole thing by train, and came back very enthusiastic and wanting to lay railway lines everywhere. The thing that strikes them most is the cheapness of railway travelling; the fare from Kifl to Baghdad is about seven rupees, worth at present about 10s. English, and the distance some 85 miles; but in old days this was a four days' journey over dangerous roads full of thieves and hostile tribes, and now it takes six hours in the train! . . .

To the Warden of Merton—

Umm al Ba'rur, May 28.— . . . I am becoming a regular farmer and talk of little but crops, especially rice, which is the local equivalent of bread in England. I haven't seen an Englishman for a clear fortnight now, and am looking forward to a visit to Najaf on Monday almost as if it were a real holiday. I have just come back from one of the most depressing visits I have ever paid. It was in honour of a sheikh just dead [Hajji Juwad] of whom I was rather fond. His sons are quite the nastiest people in Shamiyah, and are quarrelling bitterly about the inheritance (which is worth perhaps £200,000), besides which there is great rivalry as to who will be the next sheikh, an appointment which lies in my hands. I have let them see that I don't

favour any of the sons, and consequently they all poured the most loathsome flattery into my ears, and generally made me dislike them more than ever. There are nine sons, mostly by different mothers, which accounts for their rivalries: and, though they gave me a very good dinner, I have seldom spent a more thoroughly uncomfortable evening. However, it wasn't entirely wasted, as I picked up some valuable scraps of information to help me in selecting the new sheikh. . . .

To his mother—

Umm al Ba'rur, May 30.— . . . Manashi has just brought me some very fine white figs, the first fresh fruit of the season, and I am enjoying them very much. . . . There is also on the table beside me a handsome fresh tomato, the first of the season. . . . Finally, I have a bunch of flowers on the table also from Manashi, a jolly pink thing whose name I have forgotten, not unlike an oleander, and a sort of very large wild thyme, which combine to make a satisfactory bouquet.

Outside, the servants are shooting the sparrows. I couldn't stand them with their horrible love-making and chirping any longer, and Shakir said he could destroy them with one of my store of confiscated rifles, by removing the bullet and loading with a kind of very hard grain like peas. He has fired two rounds so far, thoroughly alarming me and the neighbourhood, and hasn't killed any yet, though there are at least 200 in the house at the moment, and it is a very tiny house. He says if he goes on long enough he'll frighten them, but I don't think sparrows have enough intelligence to be frightened. They are loathsome creatures; I dislike them even more than I dislike flies and beetles, and they make the house filthy.

. . . I went to the obsequies of Hajji Juwad, but his sons were so beastly and contemptible that I haven't the patience to describe it or them. One of them whispered in my ear, 'Before you came we were weeping; they said to us, "Don't weep, the Hākim is coming, and he's more to you than your father."' He thought this sort of muck would predispose me to favour his claims: and I with difficulty refrained from telling him that that remark would go heavily against him. . . .

To his father—

Umm al Ba'rur, June 4.—I have not very much news at present, and my visit to Kufa, whence I returned on the 2nd, was not very interesting. I heard about the Shah's visit: he was very sick the first day, but better the second, and able to do part of the programme; and he gave all the officers very handsome jewelled rings worth from £50 to £100 each, one of which I might perhaps have got if I had been present. However, I didn't regret the loss, as a diamond ring isn't much good to me. . . . I brought back with me a good Persian grammar, so now I am working hard at it. . . .

Politics are pretty complicated here at the moment, but little direct information is available, and the coffee shops are all buzzing with rumours. There have been outbreaks of rowdiness in Baghdad, and the holy element in Najaf and Karbala are plotting very actively for objects which are not clear and which don't appeal to the tribes very much. In the country there are no signs of the very smallest uneasiness, and I don't think anything serious is to be expected anywhere. On the whole the country is so prosperous and the benefit of the present régime so obvious that the religious element haven't very much to work on; but their influence is of course very much of an unknown quantity. . . .

In a country like this, where the main staple of daily life is conversation and there are no newspapers worth speaking of, the rumours that are always flying round are perfectly incredible, and liable to do a lot of harm by the grossness of their exaggeration. However, in this part at all events, I don't think anything is likely to happen; certainly my people seem to be on the best of terms with me, and the fact that their crops look like being a great success this year makes them strongly in favour of the Government. I daresay there'll be a little unpleasantness in Najaf, but even there I don't think it will be much. The influences at work behind the propaganda (which is ostensibly anti-Mandate, not anti-British, and demands independence) are obscure and very mixed, and you require local knowledge to appreciate them. The honest religious fanatic . . . is a very small minority; but there are Syrian Pan-Arabs and anti-Zionists, ex-Turkish

officials, agitators from India, and an occasional Bolshevik, besides a number of Arab outlaws, who are pure anarchists. Naturally they operate almost solely in the towns; they send letters to the tribes, but the tribes appear, so far as we can tell, not to be at all impressed.

They have of course one absolutely genuine cry, which is that the Allies, ourselves included, have not kept our promises. If you read the Anglo-French Declaration of November 8, 1918, and the address to the town of Baghdad made on our triumphal entry in March 1917,¹ you will see that this is perfectly true. Our dealings with the Zionists, too, are not over-straightforward. Consequently the propaganda is wonderfully restrained, and it only calls on everyone to come out and demand his rights according to the promises of the Allies, neither hinting violence nor indulging in abuse of the existing Government.

I don't see what we can do about these broken promises; no one but fools or politicians would ever have made them, but, as they were made they are in a way binding, and sooner than being bound by them I would prefer that we should clear out. I do not however think that this agitation will call forth any very striking response: but I see that the Turkish Peace Treaty includes a clause that Mesopotamia is to be considered an independent State! What the blazes this means I don't know; it shows that the politician must prevaricate in order to live, and thus make things intolerable for an Administration like ours!

Meanwhile he went on with public works. He writes to Mr. Cyril Bailey:

Umm al Ba'rur, June 5.— . . . As the water falls in the river, which from now onward till it reaches its lowest in

¹ General Maude's proclamation to the people of Baghdad announced that the British troops came, not as conquerors, but as liberators. 'You, the people of Baghdad, are not to understand that it is the wish of the British Government to impose on you alien institutions. The people of Baghdad shall flourish and enjoy their wealth and substance under institutions which are in consonance with their sacred laws and their racial ideal.' The Anglo-French Declaration of November 8, 1918, stated that the two Powers intended to establish among the former subjects of the Turks 'national governments and administrations drawing their authority from the free choice of indigenous populations.' (Quoted in Miss Bell's *Review of the Civil Administration of Mesopotamia*, 1920.)

October or thereabouts is a steady process, my tribes have to put dams in to keep up the levels; and we are just going to start work on them. They are very wonderful things, made, according to the wisdom of time immemorial, of reeds and earth only; a gap of only a few yards is left in the middle to let the water through, and when you reflect that the river is about the width of the Thames at Kingston and has a depth of 10 to 12 feet and a stream of 5 to 6 miles an hour, you will see that to construct such a dam with absolutely no appliances whatever takes a bit of doing.¹ In each of the larger tribes there are one or two families who have the knowledge of this art handed down from father to son, and they take charge of operations.

After that I hope to start work at once on a road from this place to Diwaniyah, twenty miles away, and on the main railway line from Baghdad to Basrah. This will make a tremendous difference to my people and their trade, and I hope to follow it up at once by building a road on the other side to Kufa, fourteen miles away, with a bridge here. This is the through road by which pilgrims (and corpses) come in large numbers from the Tigris (Kut region) and even from Pusht-i-Kulu to the holy city of Najaf, so it has a future, and some day will certainly carry a tram or light railway. The Arab loves roads and railways, for Mesopotamia was a horrible country to travel in when we arrived; great distances, burning deserts and droughts, and innumerable highway robbers.²

I wish I were singing in the Bach choir; it is almost exactly a year since the Symphony.

To Major Cumberbatch—

Umm al Ba'rur, June 9.— . . . I have also got a fresh job in the near future, namely to obtain 5000 tons

¹ To his father he writes, June 26, that three such dams were to be constructed. 'The idea is really to plait a rope of reeds twenty or thirty feet broad and as deep as the river may require, and then load it down with earth until it becomes stable. Anything up to 100,000 bundles of reeds may be needed, and every single bundle passes through the hands of the expert, who lays it in position. His skill is transmitted from father to son, and is, I suppose, as old as Babylon.'

² To his father he writes on June 26: 'I haven't got any further with my roads, but I have been promised a school for September, which is a great step.'

of hay for the army. Hitherto they have bought from India; this year they hope to get enough from Irāq, at a saving of about 50 per cent., and as they are paying the tribes 40 rupees a ton for the hay brought to the river bank, it is a profitable transaction both ways. But it needs a bit of organising. This also will be in full swing in about a month.

After finding [the work] an almost impossible strain, I have now come thoroughly to enjoy it, and to do much better work, as I know everything, and everyone comes straight to me instead of trying devious routes. . . . Now that things are running smoothly and the native subordinates know what's wanted of them, there's much less judicial and routine work, and also the large crop area and the general expectations of prosperity are a wonderful tonic to the people.

The political atmosphere is very thunderous, as I expect you know. I haven't the knowledge to appreciate the importance of what is going on, but it is practically confined to Baghdad, with some energetic agents in the holy cities, Najaf and Karbala. Outside the pure malcontents—an interesting Adullamite type produced by the Arab, but I think very rare—and what I believe to be a very small proportion of real religious fanatics, who will never accept British rule, their propaganda appears not to have the least effect on the tribes, at all events in these parts. But of course one never knows when dealing with the religious element; it is, I suppose, the most incalculable stimulus to human passion that exists. I personally am convinced that the sentiment of the country is entirely in favour of a strong government and highly anti-democratic; certainly Baghdad knows and cares nothing about the tribes and their agriculture, and the tribes loathe the Baghdadis. I really know nothing of Baghdad, however, so I can't judge what is to be done about it. But I don't expect to be assassinated this year. . . .

To his mother—

June 11.—I came back yesterday from a short visit to a very distant desert section of the Shibl, whom I hadn't before seen. They are lucky in their sheikh, a keen

little man like a robin, with a great deal of go in him in the matter of cultivation, and enough money to develop his land. This is desert, barren for perhaps the last two hundred years or more, and he is gradually lengthening his canals and getting water on to more and more of it, and getting in return good crops of wheat, barley, and millet, besides what he makes out of his camels, sheep, buffaloes, and horses. Naturally his neighbours are jealous of him and say he has stolen their land, which is quite untrue; there is a big land dispute between all the Shibl, but, after seeing what good work this man has done, I shall certainly not let any of his land be taken from him. It was awfully hot down there, and a troublesome journey; I left his madhif yesterday morning at about 6.30, having got up about 5 and done some palavering with various other Shibl sheikhs, travelled nearly an hour on horseback, then three hours in a canoe, and then three hours in my motor boat, getting home in the heat of the day at 1.30 P.M.—and it was hot. However, I am none the worse, but I avoid being out after 11 A.M. if possible. The Shibl are suffering acutely from Ramadhan, which they were observing very strictly; it is a most cruel ordinance for men who have to work in the sun all day, but when one sympathises they shrug their shoulders and say, 'What can we do? It is Allah's ordinance for us,' and there's the end of it.

I think of going to Najaf to-morrow. The political atmosphere is very cloudy indeed, and I want to have the latest news. I have had a lot of interesting talks with my own people lately, and am perfectly confident that, outside the possibility that anything might happen in Najaf itself, there is not the slightest chance of any trouble in the district. The tribes are contented, and look to Government and not to their sheikhs (whom they largely detest) for justice and assistance. There is, however, a lot of propaganda going on with no very definite object, but run by, on the whole, a thoroughly bad lot of knaves and fools of the C.U.P. [Young Turk Committee of Union and Progress] type, backed by a religious element which is always dangerous and incalculable, whose practical end is simply to hamper and obstruct the work of Government. In Western Shamiyah there is a clique of men

of this type, working round a tribal man¹ of great wealth and notorious treachery, and they are calling on my sheikhs to join with them in presenting a memorial to the Major and to Baghdad, etc. I don't think my sheikhs are mostly being drawn, and I am thinking of calling a meeting of them and telling them in pretty straight language that now is the time for them to show that their professions of gratitude and loyalty so often made really mean something, and that they must come out in the open and help the Government. The truth is, of course, that they all know perfectly well that, if our Government were withdrawn or even seriously weakened, out would come rifles on every side, there would be enormous slaughter, the whole of their present prosperity would vanish, and they would not get the roads and railways, etc., that they really want and appreciate. Not one of the responsible people seriously wants to weaken our position for one moment. But they have what Doughty very well calls the elvish mind of the Arab, and they think they are great heroes to be flirting with liberty, nationalisation, and self-determination, and when the propagandists flatter them by telling them that they are good sheikhs and that the Government is robbing them of their hard-earned money in taxes to send to England (whereas the wretched British taxpayer is paying £25 million a year for the pleasure of maintaining law and order here), and then the religious element comes in with its deadly influences, they are easy tools.

They have not, as I say, the least idea what they really want when they do put forward their memorials, and they would be the first to protest if, e.g. a Baghdadi were introduced in my place.

I am expecting details from Najaf to-day of an interview between some of the Western Shamiyah leaders and the Major, and on that I expect to be able to call one or two of my own people, and give them a good talking to. An Arab doesn't mind being told he's a treacherous liar if he thinks you're sincere, and it seems the only way to warn them that they're doing no good and will only get themselves run in if they go on much longer. It is all extraordinarily interesting, and I hope in the end

¹ AbdulWahid of the Fatlah ; the memorial was presented June 12.

good may come of it : and if I can get my shy and timid, but really sincere loyalists to come out and say a good word for the Government, it will be a triumph.

Your letters of May 6 have just come, and the dear flowers from the garden, which seems to be doing wonders this year and makes my mouth water. . . .

My dispenser is an Indian Muslim, by name Sharā-fatullah, which means 'the Nobleness of God' ! Arabs will be trained in time, but at present our dispensers are mostly Indian, with a few Egyptians and Syrians.

I am interested to hear that you think of a visit to the devastated areas. . . . Of course the whole thing is extraordinarily beastly, and you won't enjoy it ; you'd much better go to Brittany, and some day I'll take you round in a motor-car when the desolation has softened down. . . .

To Mr. R. Gordon Routh—

June 15.— . . . We are now in the midst of a wave of purely destructive nationalism, which aims, by methods of which the less said the better, to get the country to declare that they won't be given to anybody under the ægis of a mandate, and that they claim a free united independent Arab United States. I think I am as good a Radical and Nationalist as ever I was in England, though when you're all alone and your political moves are to some extent guided by the fact that if you do the wrong thing you, or someone else, may not live to be a hundred, the actual bearing and value of principles as such is apt to grow insignificant ; but religious politics are not part of my programme of Nationalism or Freedom.

My tribes, being singularly prosperous this year and very well contented with peace and security, do not seem to be in the least affected by all the propaganda, but a few of the sheikhs, who would be glad of an excuse to fall on their neighbours and recover some of the political power which, as robber barons, they enjoyed with the most amazing ups and downs in Turkish time, and especially in the interregnum from 1914 to 1918, and think they cut a heroic figure by uttering sentiments which they don't understand and certainly wouldn't accept if they did, are intriguing vigorously. The propaganda is dangerous in the holy cities (Najaf and Karbala, etc.), because real



crusty old fanatics, whose words are worshipped as more divine than the Qu'ran itself, are apt to let fall silly remarks about the fate of Muslims who accept a favour from a Christian Government, or even say 'Thank you' to an A.P.O. who gives them a lift in his motor-car : and to call a Muslim a Nasrani (Christian) is not just an insult, or even an infamy ; it is, from some very holy lips, almost a verdict of eternal damnation. The people, the very holy people I mean, who say such things, are doubtless sincere, and therefore not in the long run dangerous : the danger is from the devils who work the oracle.

To his father—

Umm al Ba'rur, June 17.— . . . We are in the midst of a tremendous wave of politics which are exciting, though in some ways unpleasant. It is due to a diseased nationalism backed by religious prejudice ; but the real impetus comes from a group of real bad eggs, who want plunder more than anything. The leaders are taking (to their credit, be it said, though their motives are perhaps better left veiled) the greatest possible pains to avoid any sort of demonstration, and things are passing off very quietly, I am glad to say : there is fortunately no discontent among the people for them to work on, and but for the religious appeal they would be making a very poor show. But I shan't be sorry when it's all over, for it holds up the work of the district and makes one suspicious of everybody.

I went up to Najaf on Saturday and found Colonel Wilson there, he having flown down in the morning from Baghdad. . . . I got all the Najaf and Baghdad news, and we made the necessary plans for precautionary action, which is going along very satisfactorily. On his way home Colonel Wilson flew over here, and the two aeroplanes made an extraordinary impression, cheering all my friends and completely silencing the babblers, which shows you the sort of thing one is dealing with. Umm al Ba'rur had never before seen an aeroplane.

Apart from a germ or two in Ghammas, which I think I can destroy without any trouble, my sheikhs and principal people have been behaving exceedingly well through it all, so much so that the arch-conspirators have sent special agents to find out why they aren't getting proper

support from this district, and a bribe said to amount to £1000 cash down to one of my biggest sheikhs, a man who in the past was a tremendous warrior and robber baron, far above petty affairs like cultivating, and is consequently now very poor. I learn that on this very day the money is being offered and a special body (consisting largely of his old enemies) is calling on him at his madhif. This is amusing, for I arranged on Sunday with Norbury to renew to him, his brother, and his cousin, an allowance of 1000 Rs. per month (which he drew at first from us but which was afterwards cancelled, before my time) until we can get their land properly under cultivation and restore their fortunes. There is not much difference between £1000 L.T. and 1000 Rs. per month for a year; and I had already arranged and informed him that I would spend next Saturday night with him and give him details. It will be interesting to know what happens to-day; but I like and trust the man, and I fancy he will give the deputation a pretty straight answer.

I learnt in Najaf that one of my sheikhs called Marzuq, whom I had reason to suppose loyal, was making inflammatory speeches and giving anxiety, and that it looked as if he might have to be arrested—preventively, of course. I very strongly deprecated this, and indeed I have not altogether agreed with the policy of some of my elders and betters in many respects lately; not because it is severe, very much the reverse, but because it takes short views. However, they know more about Najaf affairs than I do. Anyway I argued this point at great length, the more so as he is the only man in my district whose arrest was even considered; and eventually it was agreed I should bring him back in my launch and, having got him here, in this quiet atmosphere, far from the turmoils of the holy city, give him a good strong talking to. This I did, feeling like a hero of R. H. Benson or some such soul-stuffer fighting for the future of Marzuq: it was a comic performance. The result was to me completely satisfactory; he cleared himself well of the charge of lying and treachery, and swore eternal fidelity to me, though not to the Government. This raises the most difficult question of our type of Government: that one develops a very strong personal position (which I think on the whole I have) in which it

appears to the native that a change of Hākim is more of an earth-shaking event almost than a revolution might be imagined to be in England. Marzuq, who was formerly a great warrior and a very powerful man, saw large sections of his tribe cut away from him by my predecessors and given to men he despised; my predecessors were unquestionably bad politicians, but I suspect that in this case what they did was for the general good, and the detached sections are great and prosperous. Still, one cannot expect a great sheikh to look very warmly on such democratic procedure; and until I came, Marzuq was certainly hostile. I have been the means of restoring his land to cultivation, and he looks like having a very fine rice crop this year; hence his devotion to me. The following may amuse you. I was remarking that, while I thoroughly approved of free speech and outspoken demands for whatever anyone considered his rights, I could hardly admit that a propaganda was sound which obtained signatures by the simple cry shouted from the housetops 'Whoever does not sign is a Christian.' He agreed, and admitted the truth of the charge against the Najafis' methods, and then said, 'Anyway, *you're* worth twenty Muslims, and I don't care who hears me say so.' . . .

On the political agitation Saumarez writes to Lady Mary Murray, June 18:

However sure one is of one's own position and one's own people, [the agitation] is bound to be a bit of a strain on the mind, especially living alone. My own tribes are not being appreciably disturbed by the propaganda, and my sheikhs are, on the whole, behaving admirably, so that, were it not for the proximity of Najaf and its 'holy' influences, all would be well. But the religious part of the propaganda is subtle and dangerous, and one never knows quite how big a flame it may project, nor indeed at what point the local atmosphere would become combustible.

At present we have on our side three tremendously strong assets, which, if mankind were amenable to reason, would make us invulnerable. (I am writing, of course, of my own country, which, as you know, is purely agricultural and tribal, and what I say does not apply to the towns without a good deal of qualification.)

(1) The people have not forgotten the disastrous interregnum between the departure of the Turks and our coming ; and they know well enough that if we withdraw nothing could prevent a very much worse anarchy developing ; for the country is now much richer, and also we have entirely upset the balance of power as between tribes which assumed its shape under the very weak Turkish government, so that the transition caused by the outbreak of war, though entirely ruinous, was a long-drawn operation.

(2) We have given and are giving them roads and railways, restored a good deal of land to cultivation, and taken the first steps to revive the prosperity of a people who have never quite forgotten the traditions of their wealth and greatness. Nobody thinks that without being subject to a mandate this process can continue.

(3) We have enormously weakened the despotism of the sheikh, inasmuch as the poorest cultivator can for the sum of eighteenpence present his petition to the A.P.O. and get his case heard. The cultivators, therefore, do not now look to the sheikh as in the past.

You might perhaps say in view of these very real items of credit that we can have nothing to fear from hostile propaganda, since it can have nothing but the disgruntlements of a few individuals to work on. As a matter of fact I personally don't think we have : but the influence of the present propaganda, which is demanding a free Irāq with no insulting patronage of mandate, administrative assistance, or protection, is dependent on the following :

(1) *Religion*.—The securing of signatures for an appeal is very easily accomplished in a holy city such as Najaf by circulating the statement that whoever does not sign is a Nasrani (Christian).

(2) *The Tribal System*.—Despite what I said above, the institution of law and order in Irāq is only three years old, in many places less : and certain sheikhs who, being great warriors, were in those days much more powerful and prosperous than they now are, would gladly resume the occupation of robber barons. This particularly applies to desert people as against cultivating tribes. And the tribesman has not altogether forgotten that raiding and

plunder have their pleasant aspects, even though a more steady prosperity may be expected through law and order.

(3) *Pure Nationalism*.—I use this term to mean the natural and right sentiment of every decent man against a foreign domination, unadulterated by religious considerations. One can make a good deal too much of it, and I can swear to the fact, confirmed to me by many conversations with Arabs, that the average sheikh, indeed I can think of no exceptions, and I will say every sheikh, would far rather be governed by an Englishman than by either another sheikh or by a Baghdadi: while as for the view of the cultivator on being governed by his sheikh, I need not speak. Still, the educated young man of the towns is very properly Nationalist, and the wave of 'democratic freedom' which the war has thrown up has of course its reaction here, as when the sheikh receives his tax demands and feels happily that if only these 'fathers of hats' (the Arabic for an Englishman with his perpetual topee) would go away, there would be no fear of the occurrence of these unpleasant reminders.

To-day is the great festival which marks the close of Ramadhan and the end of the great fast. I had consequently to attend in my office this morning for a little ceremony accompanied by coffee and sweets. First the higher Government servants came and sat solemnly round and made complimentary speeches, to which I replied with such thanks as I could muster in Arabic and a very genuine gratitude for their loyalty and good work. Then the principal townspeople, Muslim and Jew, came and sat round, and there was a similar performance, which, however, contained a speech in really good Arabic by the one and only educated man in the place. Then the lower officials, office-boys, police and night watchmen (ten professional thieves suborned to catch thieves), the water-carrier and the sweeper, came and kissed my hand and stumbled over their boots. Then I distributed some money among them, and retired home to do a little work.

To-morrow morning I shall have a similar function, but on a much smaller scale, and from the sheikhs only; but I do not think many will come in, and I shan't be sorry if they don't.

To his mother—

June 19.—I must write you one line to-day, if only because it is the anniversary of our singing the 'Sea Symphony' at Oxford, and your visit to that delectable place. To-day is also by way of being a great day, being the second of the great feast which marks the close of the trials of Ramadhan, and brings a very real rejoicing this hot weather.

Yesterday and to-day were of course office holidays, and I am 'at home' to callers, of whom I have had to-day nearly a dozen, neighbouring sheikhs come to pay their respects and offer their congratulations. Yesterday morning I had a more formal reception in the office, first of officials, who made me nervous speeches, to which I replied as best I might, and then the townspeople, who were very eloquent. My table, as I write, is spread with inferior sweets, and on it stands one article which gives a true Arabian Nights touch to the proceedings, namely a sprinkler full of rose water, which the servants pour over the guests when they take their seats. . . .

Meanwhile the work and the strain of the agitation had not as yet told heavily upon him. He writes to various correspondents: 'I am astonishingly fit: I can never remember to have felt so well or had such an appetite in my life: and my appearance causes much comment, as I am burnt a brick red and distinctly getting fat; general appearance like a harvest moon.' 'I don't think the cares of government have aged me very much, though to my horror I have discovered other regions of my head following the example of the white lock, and the hot weather is not making me any thinner.' Nor did the insects trouble him much. 'It's true there is an awful mass of live-stock, especially in the ceilings around a lamp, but they don't really give very much trouble when one is used to them—only mosquitoes, sandflies and fleas are really bad. There aren't any flowers in my desert, and in Irāq there is no rainy season, merely months in which it may rain, and months in which it can't rain.'

To his mother—

Umm al Ba'rur, June 30.— . . . I should like you to see my assortment of fruit on the table and to taste it—two

kinds of melon, green grapes, peaches and nectarines. The latter are delicious, though very small—in fact much like what we had one year from the flowering peach in the front garden [at home]. The green grapes are like what we used to get in the French hotels for dessert, small but very pleasant. I eat about twenty peaches and nectarines daily and lots of grapes and melon. They cost absurdly little. . . . I don't think I have been so thoroughly well since before I was wounded. The heat seems to do me nothing but good, though lately I've been touring a lot in the sun : for I have not found it possible to cut down my touring at all so far, and during the past month I was 18 days on the move. We had a few unpleasant hot nights just before the midsummer, but now we are getting glorious cool nights, and this makes all the difference. July and August will be slightly hotter, but I fancy not very much. I see the Baghdad temperature has been up to 116°, and we may expect a few days of 120°–125° but not many. . . .

I have been rewarded for a lot of anxieties by the generally healthy tone of my district during what has been a rather stormy month. The agitation, having absolutely no basis of grievances to work upon, is almost certainly dying away ; we shall get it again in some form constantly, for the pundits of Islam will never approve of any form of Christian intervention in these countries ; but I still think there is a chance for Irāq, though its problems are formidable to a degree which you can hardly imagine.

I wish you would persuade Julie to come out in November. She can't really want to go to Belfast—isn't it in *ULSTER* ? What a horrible idea. . . .

This was the last letter from Saumarez which reached England. No doubt he wrote subsequently, but communications were cut with Baghdad, and the letters have been lost.

The unrest,¹ which he had perhaps understated in

¹ For the full history of the rising and its antecedents see Miss Gertrude Bell's official *Review of the Civil Administration in Mesopotamia*, Cmd. 1061, 1920. The following is condensed from her account : The unrest, fostered largely by unemployed Turkish ex-officials and Baghdad Nationalists, was stimulated by events in Syria. Signs of trouble, apparent in January, were more numerous and graver in the spring. On May 3 it was announced that

writing home, had hitherto been less acute in Eastern Shamiyah than in the neighbouring divisions : but in the middle of June the sheikhs on pilgrimage at Karbala seem to have formed a definite plan for revolt, which was encouraged by the popular belief that the mandate entailed the withdrawal of the British troops. Signatures, too, had been collected, partly by religious pressure, to a covenant among the tribes for conjoint action.

The movement, as he had stated (p. 277), aimed ostensibly at immediate independence and no mandate ; and on June 12 a petition in this sense had been presented to Major Norbury (p. 282). Some of the signatures were forged. It was referred to Baghdad. Meanwhile the task of the Political Officers was to keep down the Islamic agitation in the holy cities (*post*, p. 314), and to quiet the tribal unrest. To this end prominent agitators were arrested on June 22 at Hillah and Karbala, notably Mirza Mohammed Ridha, who was himself in touch with the Bolsheviks and the Turks, and was the son of Mirza Mohammed Taqui, the most influential personage among the Shi'ah Muslims. Through Major Norbury's influence, this arrest was acquiesced in by the notables of Najaf ; but on July 2 a local sheikh was arrested at Rumaitha in the Diwaniyah Division, in consequence of his insolence to the Assistant Political Officer ; and his followers besieged the town and cut the railway, isolating Rumaitha and Samawa.

In Western Shamiyah Major Norbury had arranged to meet the chief leaders of the Fatlah tribe at the madhif of its nominal head, Sheikh Mujbil al Farun, on July 1. He was accompanied by Captain Hopkins, the Assistant Political Officer of Western Shamiyah, Major Nicholl, the 'grass officer,' and Saumarez. Only a few of the

Great Britain had accepted the mandate. A Council of State and an elective Assembly, in conjunction with which bodies Sir Percy Cox would draw up a Constitution, were promised for the autumn, but this did not satisfy the agitators. Their aim was an independent Islamic government, but this to the Shi'ah mujtahids meant a theocratic State, to the Sunnis and Baghdadi freethinkers an independent State under the Amir Abdullah, and to the tribes no government at all. The sheikhs on the Tigris, when pressed to join the movement, demanded an assurance that they would no longer have to pay Government dues. And a conspiracy of Bolsheviks, Turks, and Arab Nationalists had long been exploiting religious passion, the only common ground between the various insurgent elements, to undermine British influence in the Middle East.

Fatlah sheikhs were present; a further conference was therefore arranged for, to take place at Umm al Ba'rur: but, at the last, Abdul Wahid (afterwards a prominent insurgent leader) made a provocative speech, addressed to the Arabs present rather than to the English visitors, and, as the latter left, they were hooted and the launch stoned. It was learnt that this insult had been pre-meditated: and it was determined to transfer the proposed conference from Umm al Ba'rur to Kufa, and to arrest three of the Fatlah leaders there—Abdul Wahid, Saiyid Alwan, and Saiyid Hadi Zawaini.

But the Fatlah sheikhs were suspicious, and would only come, with about 200 armed retainers, as far as Marzuq's madhif. Saumarez decided to meet them there, and dined with Marzuq at 9 P.M. on July 5. Then he held a conference lasting four hours, but with no result. 'You have offered us independence,' said Saiyid Alwan¹; 'we never asked for it, we had never dreamt of it till you put the idea into our heads: for hundreds of years the country has lived in a state as far removed from independence as it is possible to conceive; then you come with your promise of independence, and every time we ask for it you imprison us.'

The problem was now (a) to keep the Bani Hasan from allying themselves with the disaffected Fatlah, and (b) to secure the neutrality of the Khazail and their followers the Shibl. The second aim seemed to have been attained by a conference held at Umm al Ba'rur on July 6, between Major Norbury (accompanied by Saumarez) and three Khazail sheikhs, when the latter undertook to support the British in return for a promise that they should eventually be put in possession of the lands which had been wrongfully transferred from them to the Fatlah by the Turks.

But the Bani Hasan could not be won over: at the risk of his life Saumarez, latterly accompanied by Marzuq² with an armed Arab escort, toured the division visiting

¹ Not to be confused with Sheikh Alwan al Hajji Sa'dun of the Bani Hasan.

² Marzuq at the last took up his abode for several days in Umm al Ba'rur to protect Saumarez more efficiently. His tribe, the Awabid, occupied land adjacent to Umm al Ba'rur on the opposite bank, and extending some miles upstream. The Humaidat tribe was immediately adjacent to Umm al Ba'rur on the east.

them. Almost nightly he and the other British political officers were warned by their servants not to expose themselves, and to sleep indoors and not (as usual in the hot weather) on their roofs; and there is reason to believe that he escaped assassination on one of his journeys only because he returned by a different route. One of the most friendly and most influential of the Bani Hasan sheikhs, Lafta Shamkhi, was too ill to see him: the Fatlah leaders bribed another, Alwan al Hajji Sa'dun, with £1000 (p. 315), and were offering large sums, behind the Khazail, to the Shibl, a tribe which, though not connected with the Khazail by descent, usually follows them in war. The British Administration met these offers by an advance of pay amounting to £2000 to be given through the Khazail to the Shibl on their impending mobilisation, so that they would not be so open to influences from outside. But the disaffected sheikhs had obtained a great asset in the support of a very rich and very holy man of great influence, Saiyid Nur.

Meanwhile the Fatlah, after futile negotiations with Captain Hopkins, the Assistant Political Officer of Abu Sukhair, began on July 13 to surround that town. A day or two earlier Saumarez had arranged a further conference between the Bani Hasan leaders and Major Norbury, just below Abu Shora, which lies some three miles east from Kufa, for July 13. While it was in progress Marzuq, who was escorting Saumarez, whispered to him that the situation was dangerous; that the opposite bank was lined with armed Arabs, and the British officers might be cut off unless they left at once. His advice was taken: Major Norbury and Captain O'Connor went upstream in their motor-bellum to Abu Shora, Saumarez remaining behind with Marzuq. Some sixty Arabs, armed and defiant, walked on the banks alongside the boat: at Abu Shora the British officers, without being detected by the Arabs, hastily received two packages, each containing £1000 in gold to be given through the Khazail to the Shibl, from the police who were carrying them, sent them down stream in the motor-bellum, and, without appearing flurried, started in their Ford car, with their revolvers handy, at twelve miles an hour for Kufa, Saumarez taking back the £2000 to Umm al Ba'rur.

Less than five minutes after they had left, the Arabs disarmed the guard and looted the post.

Meanwhile the detachment of the 108th Indian Infantry camped near Kufa was withdrawn into that town, and preparations were made for a siege. On the evening of the 16th Saumarez, escorted by Marzuq, arrived at Kufa with an offer from the sheikhs of a truce for four days, on condition that certain proposals for peace should be forwarded to the Civil Commissioner and that the garrison of Abu Sukhair should be withdrawn to Kufa. At a conference next day the majority of the leaders present were induced, largely as it would seem through Saumarez's exertions, to consent. Against his own wish he remained at Kufa, the sheikhs fearing that, if he returned, he would keep the Humaidat tribe from rising. His possessions were brought in from Umm al Ba'rur a few days later by Manashi, a clerk in the Government office at Umm al Ba'rur, and son of Azra the Jew. They were allowed to pass, in spite of the rising, owing to his personal popularity among the Arabs. With them came the £1000 in gold which had been intended as the final instalment of the payment to the Khazail for the Shibl. On July 20 the siege of Kufa began.

Two days after arriving there Saumarez was down with fever owing to overstrain; but on the afternoon of July 22 he got up and dressed. The rest is better told in a letter to his mother from Major Norbury, written shortly before Kufa was relieved three months later:

'On July 22 the enemy started a very serious fire on one flank of our defences in an effort to burn us out. I had been long engaged with this when, at about 5.30 P.M., your son joined me to see if he could help, after having finished some work elsewhere. The fire was nearly over, and I was selecting points for posting sentries. I was walking forward to one of these posts and he was with me, not more than a few inches separating us, when suddenly he dropped at my feet. He had been shot by a sniper. The bullet passed through his neck, and death was instantaneous. It was so sudden and unexpected, for a moment I could not realise what had happened. We carried him back to safety, but he never uttered a sound or word of any sort. In the briefest instant he



KUFA : GENERAL VIEW.



GHAMMAS : WOOL MARKET, EAST END OF BAZAAR.



passed from the trouble and toil of this world to his rest.

‘He was buried the same evening, and I read the burial service over his grave.’

The news of his death reached Baghdad a few days later as a bazaar rumour, and his family was officially notified on August 13 that there were ‘the gravest fears for his safety.’ It was promised, however, that an effort would be made to obtain further news by arranging a means of signalling between the garrison and the aeroplanes which visited it at intervals. After an attempt at signalling by means of a code had proved futile, a message by aeroplane suggested the use of Verey lights. Two lights were to mean ‘Well,’ three ‘Killed.’ Three were fired; but the third missed fire, and before another could be sent up, the plane, which was under heavy musketry fire from the besiegers, had proceeded—naturally enough—on its way back to Baghdad. The news that Saumarez was safe reached his family on September 13, and it was not until October 23 that they learnt the truth.

On October 25 Miss Gertrude Bell wrote to his mother :

‘His death is to me a very real personal loss. I thought him one of the most brilliant as well as one of the most lovable creatures I had ever met, and was looking forward to knowing him better and above all to being associated in the work for which he had shown such astonishing aptitude. His personality had already made a remarkable impression, and he was talked of even by those who had never seen him. When the news of his death began to be rumoured, an Arab friend of mine told me that in a coffee-shop in Baghdad he had heard him spoken of with great respect. The speaker said that he was the friend of all the sheikhs, and all loved him. “Yes,” said another, “if he had lived he would one day have been High Commissioner.” That was what the Arabs thought of him.

‘You know that he learnt Arabic without any effort. When I saw him in the Shamiyah last December he was already talking beautiful colloquial Arabic and reading himself all his Arabic correspondence. It was a truly wonderful feat. I saw him again in the spring, when he came up to Baghdad for a couple of days, and we made all

sorts of plans for his next visit. I wanted him to meet some of my Arab friends here and get into touch with Baghdad opinion.

‘I can realise from my own feelings about him what your pride in him must have been.’

Mr. Lionel Smith, of the Education Department, Baghdad, wrote to his father, the Master of Balliol, on October 23 :

‘It is a sad blow to read, as I did yesterday, that poor Mann was killed on July 22 at Kufa. No one of all the Englishmen out here made a greater impression both on Arabs and on English. The Arabs not only liked him—anyone can make them do that—but they had a great appreciation for him. It is a pity. If it is any consolation to his friends to know that he was appreciated out here, they can at any rate be sure of that.’

Major Norbury wrote to the High Commissioner for Mesopotamia officially on November 21 as follows :

‘I beg to bring to your notice the very excellent services rendered by the late Captain Mann during the few months previous to the rebellion.

‘From May onwards there was a strong party in this Division putting forth their utmost efforts to bring an insurrection in this area to a head. Their failure to do this until the middle of July was largely due to the skill and energy displayed by Captain Mann. He worked unceasingly day and night. He stood almost alone against a very strong combination, yet he met and for long resisted all their efforts to achieve disaffection in his district (Eastern Shamiyah).

‘It is my opinion that had he been able to keep in closer touch with the Bani Hasan he might have kept them apart from the Fatlah, in which event the Division could not have risen. But though he worked for many weeks for twenty hours out of the twenty-four, during the last few weeks at great personal risk, distances were too great. He was well aware that there was a plot to murder him, yet he refused all protection, on grounds of policy. It would seem that the delay in the outbreak of hostilities in the Shamiyah Division greatly assisted the military situation in Irāq generally. If this be so, the credit is almost wholly due to Captain Mann for the manner in

which he handled his district, situated as it was as a buffer between the disaffected areas of Western Shamiyah and Diwaniyah.'

A letter from the India Office to the family stated that: 'The High Commissioner, in forwarding Major Norbury's letter, fully endorses his appreciation of Captain Mann's work and speaks of the latter as an officer of the greatest promise, whose death was a severe loss to the Administration. The Secretary of State desires to associate himself with these tributes to Captain Mann's memory.'

POSTSCRIPT

The full story of the siege of Kufa will, it is hoped, be published elsewhere. Here only a brief account can be given. On July 30 the insurgent leaders sent in a letter giving an alarming account of the situation produced by the risings elsewhere and the defeat of the relief column from Hillah, and offering the garrison their lives on condition that they surrendered. Major Norbury, as Political Officer, formally refused their demand.

The little garrison comprised two and a half companies of Indian infantry, about 150 Arab levies, who mostly deserted, the crew of the *Firefly*, about 80 police, and some Arab and Indian clerks, and included less than a dozen Englishmen. They suffered severe privations and were heavily shelled on eight or ten occasions with the 18-pounder gun captured from the relief column. The *Firefly* was burnt on August 20. Latterly signals were interchanged with aeroplanes, and mails and tobacco dropped; but all the latter, except one package, fell far outside the besieged area. The Arabs, however, made no attempt to storm the town, and the garrison was relieved on October 17, the ninetieth day of the siege.

Most of the Arab leaders concerned fled into the desert, and information as to their subsequent fortunes is lacking.

CHAPTER XI

APPRECIATIONS

I. BY MAURICE JACKS, M.A., FELLOW, DEAN, AND
TUTOR OF WADHAM COLLEGE, OXFORD

I FIRST met Saumarez in the Michaelmas term of 1912 at Balliol, but I did not really become intimate with him till the Hilary term of 1913. Our friendship was born in the Balliol Boys' Club, where for both of us the chief interest of our undergraduate days lay. It developed into something which governed much of our lives; and from March 1913 on there were few activities or thoughts which we did not share with one another.

When I think of him during the years 1912-1914 I think mainly of two places: one is the Balliol Boys' Club, and the other a small farmhouse on the slopes of Bredon Hill in Gloucestershire; the hamlet where it was placed was named Grafton, and for fifteen years it had been regarded by our family as a home, where we had spent all our holidays. There Saumarez and I spent alone what were perhaps our happiest days together.

It is true to say that while he was at Balliol, the Boys' Club was the main interest of Saumarez's life. He visited it soon after he came up; and I find in my diary for the Hilary term 1913 frequent references to our meetings there. In the first week of the summer term I find that we spent four evenings at the Club; and that represents probably the minimum number of our weekly visits during our Balliol days (we almost invariably went together). During the Hilary and Summer terms of 1913 we were each responsible for one night a week, but did not confine our visits to those nights. In October 1913 Saumarez was made Secretary and Treasurer, a position which he continued to hold till the war came.

He was always full of ideas and schemes for the improvement of the Club, and gave much time and thought to its problems. Many of the things that were done in those years were either initiated or carried through by him. The first plan which I remember him taking in hand himself was an Essay Competition, which was a considerable success. At the same time, in conjunction with his great friend Arthur Adam, he started a singing-class and arranged one or two informal concerts. He also formed a small carpentry and fretwork class, which met once a week and attracted many of the boys. Largely under his guidance, too, one of the rooms in the Club was turned into a Library and Reading-room. He was constantly making things for the Club himself. I remember many warm summer afternoons which he spent in the Club alone making an enormous cupboard; this was the subject of much mirth to his friends, but it still stands to-day in the 'Office'—a memorial of his skill and his devotion to the Club. This was followed by another cupboard (smaller), and most of the minor repairs in the Club were done by him. One of our last joint acts before the war was to go round the Club together, in July 1914, and map out a big scheme of structural alterations, which included the instalment of a bath; much of this he proposed doing himself.

He did not confine his services, however, to these practical matters. He was keenly interested in the religious side of the Club's life, and took a Confirmation class. It had always been the custom to say prayers at the end of each evening, and to hold services on Sunday, in the gymnasium. This practice had obvious drawbacks; Saumarez was very keen that a special room should be put aside for this purpose, and, largely as a result of his efforts, this was carried out in February 1914. He also instituted a modern version of the Bible to be used at prayers.

There was no side of the Club's activities in which he did not share. Some of my pleasantest memories are of the occasions when he played cricket or football for the Club—the only occasions, I think, when he played these games at all during his Balliol days.

A word must be said about the Club camps. In July

1913 we went to Bembridge in the Isle of Wight, and in July 1914 to a site Saumarez had chosen at Warbarrow Bay in Dorset. At this camp (to which those of us who have known many look back with the happiest memories) he—as Secretary of the Club—was entirely responsible for all the arrangements. He loved the open air and the activity of camp life, and his bent for practical affairs often stood us in good stead!

No account of Saumarez's connexion with the Club would be complete without a reference to the work he accomplished in the summer of 1919. Returned from the Army in February 1919, he took over the Presidency from me in March, and in the short space of one term, almost single-handed, not only set the Club on its legs again after the war, but formed the nucleus of an old boys' club. From that nucleus has sprung the Old Boys' Club which, as a separate organization, is, as I write, beginning its life. In July 1919 he took some forty boys to camp at Radcot on the Isis above Oxford, and from there was called away to sail for Baghdad.

It is impossible to convey to another the extent or the secret of his influence over the boys or of their deep love and respect for him. Those of us who saw him in the Club, however, could feel both. He regarded himself always as an ordinary member of the Club; to 'run' the Club for the boys was always far from his thoughts. If anything went wrong he always felt that his Club suffered; and this was a new idea to many of the boys and one which eventually made a vast difference in their attitude towards us and one another. Saumarez possessed moreover a sane judgment, a scrupulous fairness, and a kindness which was always ready to listen to the smallest grievance from the smallest boy. There is no doubt that unobtrusively and unnoticed he changed for the better the outlook on life of many boys, and gave them a truer and more lasting happiness than they would otherwise have known.

The Boys' Club, I have said, was his chief interest. But I naturally saw much of him in other ways at Balliol. He was a great walker, and we spent many afternoons either on the Hinksey Hills—his favourite walk—or on Shotover, where my father was building a house and

making a garden; in the building of the house and the laying out of the garden Saumarez was keenly interested, and made many suggestions. He often stayed with us for tea and came to be regarded almost as one of the family. On these walks we were often accompanied by Arthur Adam, and there was always much pleasantry. It was Arthur's cue to scoff at what we called Saumarez's 'sentimentalism,' a characteristic which Arthur affected to abhor whenever and wherever met; and Saumarez would play up by exaggerating a quality which was not, as a matter of fact, uncongenial to him. (It used to take the form, I remember, at the beginning of each term, of a rather lovable homesickness.) There was, too, a certain dogmatism about him, which in its exaggerated form we used to call *ἀλαζονεία*; and Arthur Adam was never tired of comparing Saumarez to the *ἀλαζών* in Theophrastus. When he came back from the war the conversation resumed its old characteristics; at a reading party (Saumarez, a Wadham undergraduate, and myself) at Oldbury-on-Severn in April 1919 the old jokes were revived and the old discussions repeated.

I cannot mention all Saumarez's other activities at Balliol. He spent much time on music, and played the piano courageously and well. He was a member of the Oxford branch of the Student Christian Union, and in April 1914 its President; in this capacity he presided over a retreat on Boar's Hill in that month. He and Arthur Adam and I were members of a discussion society which used to meet at Manchester College—the Martineau Club—and Saumarez, in 1914, became a member of the Committee. He did not play many games, but in the summer occasionally played tennis with us. Nor was he much of a theatre-goer; but he and I never missed a chance of seeing the Irish Players, for whom he had a deep admiration.

Saumarez and I were at Grafton together on four occasions: 1913, October 2-8; 1914, March 1-4, 20-23, July 31-August 3. We were always alone, and did the cooking and housework ourselves. On the first occasion he bicycled over from Oxford alone, and arrived in a thunderstorm late at night; he was clever to find his way alone to so very remote a place. He was much interested

in the working of a new motor-bicycle which my father had just bought. We spent our time in walks, in an expedition to Malvern College to see my brother, and in reading; Saumarez also did a good many 'practical jobs' about the house, and characteristically spent many hours immersed in a book called 'The Tramp's Handbook.' We were profoundly contemptuous of one another's cooking, and the porridge controversy used to wax hot and furious. Our food on these occasions consisted mainly of eggs, porridge, bacon, potatoes, and jam!

March 1-4 were a holiday for both of us before Classical Honour Moderations. We bicycled from Oxford on a stormy spring afternoon (45 miles), and arrived by moonlight. We spent our days as before. On March 3 we had a telegram from Arthur Adam, to say that he was arriving in the afternoon. At Saumarez's suggestion we shut up the house, nailed the telegram on the door, and went for a long walk; the intention of this was to persuade him that we had left—but when we returned he was firmly installed! On the 4th we went back to Oxford by devious routes.

Between March 20 and 23 we were again alone. It was a week-end, and on the Sunday evening we went over to service at Tewkesbury Abbey. In July we went in order to prepare the way for Saumarez's family, who had taken the house for the first fortnight in August. Thus Saumarez was at Grafton when the war broke out.

He had a very deep affection for the place. I think particularly the simple life (it could not have been more simple) appealed to him; and we both felt that we could do more reading at Grafton than anywhere else. I shall never forget Saumarez's joy when, after an April shower, we went on to Bredon Hill and saw with our own eyes the meaning of Virgil's description of the rooks after rain:

*Tum liquidas corvi presso ter gutture voces
Aut quater ingeminant . . .*

and heard the peculiar bubbling noise that rooks make with their beaks shut on these occasions. Saumarez loved Bredon Hill; our side was barely populated—only a scattered farmhouse or so—it was all left to the animals

and birds ; and from the top is seen one of the finest views in England, over many counties. *Tà θεία* Saumarez used to call this sight. He loved, too, the simple people, and was soon well known among our few neighbours.

We were at a village church near Grafton once when some repairs were being carried out. Cut into a corner of the outside wall, where long-covering plaster had been scraped off, we with great difficulty made out the fragments of an old inscription. Two days later the weather had done its work and not a word was legible. But we wrote down at once what we could read, and Saumarez was much delighted with it. I here reproduce it ; some of the lines would have been written well of Saumarez himself :

In credit and in reputable sort
 He lived, which must deserve a good report.
 He here lies buried by the church's side,
 And right he in the truth both lived and died.
 'Tis true he could not always here attend,
 But yet he always was its hearty friend.
 His promise no one needed to distrust,
 True to his word and in his payment just.
 Much he endured and yet was patient still
 Under the sense of the Almighty Will.

II. BY VICTOR MURRAY, M.A., MAGDALEN COLLEGE, OXFORD, LATE SECRETARY OF THE OXFORD STUDENT CHRISTIAN UNION

I first came across 'J. S.' from hearing Frank Brabant talk about him. We wanted a man to be President of the Christian Union at Easter 1914, and 'J. S.' was then College Secretary in Balliol, and I was General Secretary. Brabant told me he'd be just the man if we could get him, but that he'd take some getting. He did take quite a lot of getting, but after a good deal of hesitation he agreed. I don't know whether we suffered to

some extent from that diluted type of Erastianism which seeks to use the other gifts of the world to glorify religion,—it is a subtle temptation—but at any rate I think we secretly felt that ‘J. S.’ as President would bring much *kudos* to the ‘C.U.’ With a most prepossessing appearance, sympathetic, courteous, a brilliant scholar, passionately fond of music, broad-minded, human, *justus et tenax propositi vir*, he was very far from approaching the caricatured type of the religiously-minded undergraduate.

It was a great joy to work with him on the Committee. He was very business-like, and keenly devoted to the job in hand, all the more as he veiled his earnestness with a slight covering of cynicism. Another man of similar type of mind was Kenneth Murray, of Christ Church, the Treasurer, who was killed in action in 1916. It was a wonderful set of people, composed of very various elements, extreme Catholic to extreme Evangelical, practical men some, visionaries some, and some very theological. The fellowship that resulted from such a mixture was an ethical rather than a temperamental thing. It was rarely that anyone missed a meeting, although we met every week, and it was a fellowship the memory of which, I think, meant a good deal to some of us in the dark days that were to follow.

The Christian Union was an association of people who tried to understand the Christian faith and the Christian life. It represented by no means either one type of experience or one type of theology. There was a good deal of free discussion in study circles and in general meetings on religious, social, and other questions. It was run by undergraduates, and rather welcomed than disapproved of unusual views if sincerely held. To a large extent it was a society for inquiring minds, and it fulfilled a very useful purpose in the life of the University, as it linked together in a common search after and concern for Christian ideals men of different colleges, faculties, and denominations. It was this element in it that appealed to ‘J. S.’ He disliked dogmatism of any kind, religious or political, and he particularly disliked the compulsory division of present-day Christians into sections as the result of historical accidents. He often said to me that the funda-

mental difficulty in the way of his ordination—if he should ever think of such a thing—was that he would have to be labelled ‘Anglican,’ or ‘Congregational,’ or whatever it was. I ought to mention that the Christian Union is affiliated to a still wider association, the Student Christian Movement of Great Britain and Ireland, which holds every year a student camp at Swanwick in Derbyshire.

Every Easter the Christian Union in Oxford used to hold a ‘Retreat’ for the members of the old and new committees. In 1914 we held one for three days in a hotel on Boar’s Hill. There were eighteen of us staying there together in the most glorious weather imaginable. Neville Talbot was the leader, and ‘J. S.’ led off on the first morning with an address. I think it was on a devotional subject, and he was very loth to do it; but he did it well. It has all but vanished from my mind, but the impression of it remains. I remember him saying that discussion went a very little way towards clearing up the difficulties of those who find themselves for one reason or another unable to accept the Christian position. It was really at bottom a question of what thing one loved most, and the only really transforming agency was the ‘expulsive power of a new affection.’

This address of his was a good example of ‘J. S.’s’ attitude to life as a whole. He was one of that type of men who say little, write nothing, and yet leave an influence behind them because they *care*. I remember the first time I tried to persuade him to come to Swanwick—he thought it was a poor business to go and revel in ‘fellowship’ there while there were all the young roughs of the Oxford back streets waiting to be taken to the seaside by the Balliol Boys’ Club. It struck me then that we often tended to be very self-conscious in our talking about fellowship between class and class. To him there was no matter for discussion at all; the thing was just there if only you cared to accept it. It does not really contradict that statement when I say that fellowship was always to him something which you yourself had to have a hand in; you had to make the effort of will to accept it or to create it; it was scarcely worth while if it was merely artificially created for you by pleasant surroundings, segregation, and a common temperament.

And so his attitude to the Student Movement was always critical, even at the time, or perhaps still more at the time when he was President of the Oxford 'C.U.' It was a healthy criticism for a place like Oxford. The great words 'humanity,' 'love,' 'brotherhood,' 'vocation' were always visualised in his mind in connection with Tom Smith of St. Ebbe's, or Jack Jones of Pembroke Street. He was a realist, and was essentially impatient of mere speculation. Occasionally he would come along and talk to me 'about things,' but in spite of his ability on the intellectual side it was not on that side that Christianity interested him, but rather as a practical thing. A good deal of the Oxford atmosphere made him tired. At one time he thought of going out to Alec Fraser's college in Ceylon, largely because they appeared to him to believe in that kind of Christianity which meant doing things with your hands—showing the natives how to sow seed, put in drains, and build houses.

Accordingly, the memory he has left behind of his days in the Student Movement is not a memory of speculative ideas or conversations, but rather of a man with his feet planted solidly on the earth, with a great love in his heart for his fellow-men, with a thorough hatred of humbug, unselfish always, perplexed intellectually about many things, but sure in that kind of strong faith which underlies all intellectual moods, a breath of fresh air in an atmosphere of introspection. Some words have been used so indiscriminately as to have become debased in currency, but the word I always associate with 'J. S.' is 'noble.' It is an almost indefinable quality, but at any rate one of its characteristics is that it enables you to believe in other men. And 'J. S.' did that for us. Matthew Arnold's words are as true of him as of the original to whom they were addressed:

. . . to us thou wert still
 Cheerful and helpful and firm.
 Therefore to thee it was given
 Many to save with thyself,
 And at the end of thy day,
 O faithful shepherd, to come
 Bringing thy sheep in thy hand.
 And through thee I believe
 In the noble and great who art gone.

III. BY H. H. HARDY, M.A., HEADMASTER CHELTENHAM COLLEGE, MAJOR 8TH BAT. RIFLE BRIGADE, THROUGH-OUT 1917 GENERAL STAFF OFFICER FOR CADET BATTALIONS

My recollections of Captain J. S. Mann go back to August 1914, and by a series of coincidences continue till after the war ended. He was one of the 400 undergraduates sent on the spur of the moment to Churn Camp in August 1914 to be trained at express speed for commissions in the 'First Hundred Thousand.' They were quite extraordinarily good material for the purpose, and many of them had already considerable military knowledge from the O.T.C. Though apparently not meant for a soldier, and (according to an old Company Roll Book from Churn) at first somewhat lacking in smartness and power of command, despite his keen work in the O.T.C. both at school and at the 'Varsity, he turned his brilliant intellect to the business in hand. With four other men, all of them young Fellows of Colleges, and all now killed, he remains very clearly in my mind as one who became, by the end of his five weeks' training, a really good officer, through sheer determination and character. As a companion he was then, and always, delightful, and was a great help to me in my relations with the Company in a time of extreme pressure and tension.

By the end of September 1914 we were all scattered to our various units, and, though I heard from him early in 1916, I did not meet him again till we were both on home duty in 1917. He had been badly wounded, but was obviously the right sort of man for duty with one of the newly formed Officer Cadet Battalions. His influence would be thoroughly good with officer cadets: his intelligence and character vastly above the average, and he had had the necessary experience of active service. As the Staff Officer in charge of this particular matter, I posted him, without hesitation, to No. 5 Officer Cadet Battalion at Cambridge, feeling that his knowledge of the other University would be of great assistance both to the Battalion Commander and to the Academical authorities at Trinity College. The necessary adjustments were not easy, but were carried out with the utmost good will on both sides; and when, after a short time, Mann became

Assistant Adjutant, the difficulties began to be smoothed away very signally. Later, when he was Adjutant, I had much correspondence, and some personal dealings, with him, with regard to Personnel, Training Programmes, etc., and from the War Office point of view, I can say very definitely that with no battalion did we have pleasanter relations. One particular scene was a most striking testimonial to his excellent work there as a soldier, and the admirable tact with which he had carried out his duties. Trinity College used to give a farewell dinner to the outgoing class of officer cadets. At his own earnest request, Mann also was returning to the B.E.F., although still quite unable to serve as a regimental officer owing to the lameness resulting from his wound. His health was proposed by, I think, Dr. Parry : and the outgoing Adjutant replied with a most charming and brilliant speech, throughout which, and at its end, he got such a reception as I have never seen at any gathering of the sort. It was absolutely clear that he had gained everybody's affection and respect, soldiers and civilians alike.

We next met at, I think, Wallon Cappel, where he was on the staff of the Heavy Artillery, at XV Corps' headquarters, mainly concerned with the interpretation of aerial photographs. He was as charming and amusing as ever, though, I think, not very happy in his job. Not all senior officers realised that a Temporary Officer who was a Balliol Scholar could possibly be intelligent on strictly military matters.

I visited him at Balliol College, when he had returned there in 1919, both of us being demobilised, and suggested he should come and try his hand as an Assistant Master at Cheltenham. But he was already embarked on Oriental languages, and had ideas further afield. Not long after, he took up his work in the East, and obviously made good at it from the first ; and I remember getting from him not very many months ago a long letter full of interest and humour about his task, which was difficult and many-sided enough even for the very great abilities that he possessed. It is no wonder to any of us who served with him that 'Sammy Mann' gained the affection and respect of natives, because his sympathy was so wide, and his humour so large and tolerant.

IV. BY A FELLOW-MUSICIAN

Music was always his greatest recreation—it was the surest and swiftest entry into a magical land for him—a land in which the turmoil of the outside world receded into silence; and when he and I were friends the turmoil was at its loudest all over Europe, and so perhaps the need of music with him was at its greatest. To all of us who knew him well it was natural and fitting that his most beloved musician was John Sebastian Bach. In a curious degree Saumarez possessed the greatness of soul, the perfect self-control, the religious serenity which makes itself felt so strongly in the works of this great master. He played more than any other music the Preludes and Fugues, with a sureness of touch and exquisite understanding which emphasised this similarity of spirit.

He had learnt to love Bach especially through the organ, which he played as a boy at Dulwich, and which later he got the opportunity of playing at Cambridge during the war. The 'cello he played, too, but I never heard him, and I think the piano and organ meant much more to him. He shared his first two initials with Bach, and to most of his Oxford friends he was known as 'J. S.'

Beethoven came as a very close second—we went together to many a concert to hear the great symphonies—and afterwards he would play them as duets with his mother at home. These were his two great masters, and with them always as a background he studied many others, ancient and modern—a great favourite was Cézar Franck, the Chorale, Prelude and Fugue, the breadth and sublimity of which peculiarly suited his genius—Greig, Chopin, Brahms, Schumann, and Schubert—he played all of them.

The moderns interested him increasingly, Debussy, Ravel, Moussorgsky and Scriabin. One Debussy I remember particularly vividly, 'Jardins sous la pluie'; it was marvellous how his big powerful hands magically drew from the piano the sound of tiny falling rain—of birdsong—and of sun breaking through.

He had very little time for practice, which made all the more surprising the degree of technique which he attained in such intricate compositions.

He was lucky—musically—in the army, for several times he found a piano where he was stationed. First at Meteren, where, as will be seen from his poem, a great friend and fine musician—killed afterwards at Loos—used to play. Then, when he was very gravely wounded, there was a piano in the hospital mess, which gave him great pleasure during his long wearisome convalescence; and afterwards when he was Adjutant of a Cadet Battalion in Cambridge he had a piano in his rooms. In this town he found many players and music-lovers. Indeed wherever he went he was sure to find his fellows in the love of music.

Afterwards when, still very lame, he went back in the Intelligence to France, he used to write with respect and gratitude of a mess with a piano, though often the piano was toneless and had suffered much at the hands of many soldiers.

It was in Cambridge that he first started composing himself. Mostly he set lyrics to music—one of the loveliest was Yeats's 'Had I the Heaven's embroidered cloths'—he had a wonderful power of writing the most haunting melodies, and his love of poetry always kept him from the fault common to so many great composers of subordinating the words to the music. This he never did—his music was always a real interpretation.

His *chef d'œuvre* was his setting to Kipling's 'Egg-shell'; in his accompaniment you could hear and smell and see the restless, sinister, changeful ocean, you could feel 'The fog coming up with the tide'—the eerie melody 'as the wind fell dead at the midnight the fog came down like a sheet' made you shiver—actually—as you felt the submarine 'feeling by hand for a fleet.' And then the noisy wind-blowing triumph of the little Blue Devils' return, a crescendo of sea and shouting and wind and intense excitement. The whole thing is a real masterpiece of descriptive composition.

When he came back from the war again he joined the Bach Choir, and the year before he went out to Mesopotamia the choir studied Vaughan Williams' 'Sea Symphony' and sang it in the Sheldonian a month before he left England. That 'Sea Symphony' was a tremendous joy to him, and long before most of the singers had mastered its intricacies Saumarez knew most of it by heart.

Out there in the burning heat of the Mesopotamian desert his mind turned to the cool glory of that music—and he wrote of it longingly to his mother on the anniversary of the singing.

Throughout his life his music was a real living part of him—and one felt about him that his inner life was ruled by a harmony as perfect as any he studied and played.

V. BY LIEUT.-COLONEL B. T. READY, LATE COMMANDING No. 5 OFFICER CADET BATTALION

The sad death of Captain J. S. Mann at an early age has been a bitter grief to all who knew him. I can only speak of his short stay at Trinity College, Cambridge, where he came to me on May 15, 1916, as an Instructor of No. 5 Officer Cadet Battalion, which I had the honour to command. He came sadly crippled from a wound which had left one leg shorter than the other, and I was at a loss at first how to employ him usefully. After a few days' acquaintance, however, I felt I had got a splendid worker, and one with an intellect far above the average. I consequently dispensed with all formalities and took him into my office to act as Assistant Adjutant, an official I was not entitled to have, and was amply rewarded, for in a few months my Adjutant left me and Captain Mann took his place. He had a very difficult task to perform. We were a military community living in a College full of tradition, and his knowledge of University life was invaluable. He was able to smooth over many little difficulties, and to ensure that, whilst getting all the benefits from the College for the officer cadets we were training, we did not infringe the College rules or etiquette. Our difficulties were many, and one of the greatest was to weld into one corporate body the various officers sent as instructors and the 700 officer cadets who came from all parts of the world. That the Battalion flourished and made a name for itself was due in a great measure to my Adjutant. He worked indefatigably and with judgment in furthering the welfare of all ranks, and assisted me nobly.

Alas! from my point of view, he found a remedy for

his bad leg. It was one of the most remarkable achievements of a well-known doctor, and soon Captain Mann was walking briskly and riding a horse. He might well have felt satisfied with the good work he was doing, but duty called him, and he made up his mind to try to serve overseas again. He succeeded, and left me on August 20, 1917, but not before he had trained another crippled officer in his place.

I look back to the time when Captain Mann was my right-hand man with pleasure, for on no occasion did I ever find him wanting, and I felt that he was destined for a brilliant career. After he left he still kept up his interest in us and our work, for he came to see us straight from the battle front and gave us the first-hand information which we wanted, especially on the subject of aerial photography.

My deepest sympathy goes out to his relations and friends, and their chief consolation must be that he died as he had lived, determined to do what he knew to be his duty.

VI. BY MAJOR NORBURY, D.S.O., 34TH POONA HORSE,
INDIAN ARMY: SOMETIME POLITICAL OFFICER
SHAMIYAH DIVISION, MESOPOTAMIA

In response to an urgent appeal for an assistant political officer for the Eastern District of the Shamiyah Division, the Civil Commissioner appointed, in August 1919, J. S. Mann, who had just arrived in Baghdad to make his first acquaintance with an Eastern country.

Having reported at Najaf, the capital of the Division, he proceeded in due course to Umm al Ba'rur, 16 miles S.S.E. of Najaf, where he made his headquarters and the only home he ever had in Mesopotamia.

It is worthy of note that while this was Mann's first experience of the Arab in his own country, it was also the first occasion upon which the people of this district had had a British officer resident among them. Nothing could bear more eloquent testimony to Mann's adaptability and organising powers than the administrative progress that took place during his short period of governor-





SAUMAREZ IN 1919.

(Enlarged : from a group of Political Officers photographed at Najat.)

ship; while the admiration and esteem which he immediately won (to be put to the test time after time in subsequent months) justifies the hope that, given the right type of man, British administration in Mesopotamia can lead to happy results.

The months from August 1919 to March 1920 passed most happily. Despite the heat, Mann was able to tour very extensively, and he quickly established most cordial relations with the sheikhs and lesser people whose destinies lay in his hands. Chief among his friends were the Khazail chiefs, Salman ad Dhahir, Mohammed al Abtan, and Salman al Abtan. It is only within recent years that these men fell, through various misfortunes, from very high estate. It had long been apparent that, despite their depleted fortunes, they were still men of great personal and political influence. Their conduct had been for the most part good and helpful since the British occupation, and the Civil Commissioner had approved the policy of re-establishing them as opportunity offered.

In a country so seething with intrigue and one suffering from so corrupt a past administration, no progress in this matter had been possible until I was able to get a British officer resident in that area. Mann, however, was able to give instant effect to our policy, and subsequent events showed to what good purpose he had worked. Among others with whom he established close relations were Haji Humud and Haji Jasim, the rulers of the powerful Humaidat tribe. These were steady-going public-spirited men, Haji Humud in particular, and later, in times of great stress, they stood manfully by their Governor. Later again, when the insurrection was over, and he was no longer among them, they showed in many ways their fondness for him and respect for his memory.

The last friendship calling for comment was that which Mann established between himself and Marzuq, the chief of the Awabid tribe. A man of most commanding presence, renowned for personal courage, it must be said of him that he is a hothead of the most pronounced type. His political integrity during the critical weeks preceding the outbreak was ever a subject of acute debate between Mann and myself, but of his genuine friendship for Mann personally there is no doubt; and on several occasions

when, without it, Mann's position would have been very difficult, he afforded him his personal protection.

With the cordial support of these men, Mann was soon able to demonstrate how great was the capacity for development of his area. Land disputes which had been calling for decision for months, and in some cases for years, were settled one after another. The improvement of the towns of Umm al Ba'rur and Ghammas was tackled with the utmost vigour and breadth of view, and with complete success. Thousands of acres of fallow land were brought under cultivation, and by the spring of 1920 the prospects in this district were admittedly brighter than at any period within the memory of the oldest inhabitant.

And then, alas! the clouds of a coming storm appeared on the distant horizon. In April the murmurings of disaffection began to penetrate from a neighbouring division. By May the coffee-shop gossip had become really noisy. It is hardly necessary to say that the most fantastic and impossible stories were being circulated, but those who had made themselves responsible for anti-British propaganda knew only too well the sort of stuff which appeals to the semi-educated Arab.

I here give a brief description of the situation prevailing in the Shamiyah division at this time (the middle of May). There were roughly three centres of thought: (a) The holy town of Najaf; (b) Western Shamiyah, under the sway of the rich and powerful Fatlah tribe, strongly supported by some no less influential Saiyids resident among them; and (c) Eastern Shamiyah, Mann's area. At this time the focus of all anti-government agitation along the Euphrates was the holy town of Karbala, some fifty miles from Najaf. Here the religious leaders were giving a great deal of trouble and were working ceaselessly for sympathetic action in the Shamiyah division. Najaf town was not inclined to extend much sympathy. The people had had a sharp lesson but two years previously. Equally unsympathetic were the people of Eastern Shamiyah, but those on the Western side showed marked friendship for the Karbala extremists, and worked with money and their utmost powers of persuasion to assist them. Thus the situation in the Shamiyah division resolved itself into a contest between Eastern and Western,

as to who could bring the greater pressure upon Najaf, the former in the direction of law and order, the latter towards rebellion. It was never an even contest : first, the Westerners were much nearer to Najaf and this gave them a great pull ; and secondly, those in Eastern Shamiyah were ever open to political attack from the rear, viz. from the neighbouring division of Diwaniyah, between whom and the Westerners much sympathy existed.

It was in endeavouring, in close co-operation with me, to cope with this situation that Mann spent the last days of his life ; and I cannot better depict this period than by giving a few of the more prominent crises we had to face till finally overwhelmed by the outbreak of insurrection throughout the whole country.

By the middle of June hostilities had commenced in the Diwaniyah division, upon the borders of which division Umm al Ba'rur is situated. In spite, however, of the greatest pressure upon his people from outside, Mann was able to keep the situation in his area well in hand : and this had a markedly deterrent effect in Western Shamiyah, and indeed over a far wider area. But hostile pressure was never relaxed. Heavy bribes were used against us, and with actual hostilities going on so near at hand, it soon became apparent that, save by a considerable reinforcement of troops to this area, we could hope to do no more than gain time for the military authorities at Baghdad, who had their hands very full in coping with the disturbances that had actually broken out. Lacking the necessary military force to compel order, the only course left to us was to make the utmost use of such sheikhs as were friendly.

On July 7 Mann arranged that we should meet and, if possible, come to a working arrangement with the Khazail chiefs already referred to. The meeting took place at 6 P.M. and lasted till 11 P.M. The results upon the immediate situation were highly gratifying, and though finally the flood-tide of insurrection swept these men into the battlefield against us, there is no doubt that they were never wholeheartedly in it, and their lukewarmness was of the greatest assistance to the British throughout the whole period of the trouble. Our enemies were not long in appraising this great stroke of Mann's, and redoubled

their energies to undermine the determination of the Khazail chiefs to stand by us. Money and propaganda were poured out, and in the succeeding week Mann's whole time by day, and often by night, was spent in touring his district and pitting his personal influence (he had no other weapon) against this tremendous pressure. He paid visits to all his sheikhs, in several cases at considerable personal risk, for there were those among them who were obviously in the hostile camp. His friend Marzuq accompanied him on most of these visits. At first they proceeded unarmed, but as the days passed Marzuq preferred to bring out a small bodyguard with them.

Backward and forward swayed the political pendulum until July 12. I had joined Mann on many of his visits and had two or three times visited him in his home in Umm al Ba'rur. I quote from my diary July 12: 'To Umm al Ba'rur. Apparently great improvement in the situation. Returned to Kufa 5 P.M. At 10 P.M. grave reports from both Eastern and Western Shamiyah.' I had on July 10 gone to Baghdad by air. My object was to get reinforcements. I begged with all the force I could command, and the Civil Commissioner threw all his weight in on my side. But it could not be, and so at last, after five weeks of intense effort to win through by diplomacy, we were on July 12 confronted with the prospect of inevitable defeat. It seemed certain that hostilities would break out on July 13, and so it happened. The Fatlah tribe, at this moment some 6000 strong, concentrated during the night, surrounded Abu Sukhair (the headquarters of Western Shamiyah), and commenced hostilities. Immediately on receiving this news I ordered Mann to return to me at Kufa. He refused, believing that he might still be able to control the situation if he remained at his post. I then appealed to the Civil Commissioner to order him back, but received a reply to the effect that the Commander-in-Chief wished Mann to remain at his post regardless of personal risk, *as his presence at Umm al Ba'rur was having such a telling effect upon affairs in the neighbouring division*. Hardly, I think, could a man have been paid a higher compliment.

I now come to the last great act of Mann's life. The garrison and political staff at Abu Sukhair had now

(July 16) been for three days in a state of siege. Their rations were exhausted. It transpired later that they had abandoned all hope of being relieved, and had decided that there was no possible chance of their being able to cut their way back to Kufa. At 10 P.M. on this night, as I was sitting brooding unhappily upon the gloomy prospects, I heard the familiar voice of Mann from across the river. I crossed in a launch to meet him (we had by this time cut the bridge), and was overjoyed to see him once more escorted by Marzuq. Mann informed me that he had brought 'certain terms for a truce.' By what energy and skill he had brought about this situation I was never to learn. Suffice it to say that the Arabs agreed to cease all hostilities for four days provided I would (1) forward certain proposed peace terms to the Civil Commissioner; (2) withdraw the Abu Sukhair garrison to Kufa.

Here, indeed, was a seeming miracle. Four days more for the hard-pressed British troops in their efforts to effect the relief and withdrawal of the garrison of Rumaitha, now for three weeks in a state of siege: and, in addition, a chance of effecting the release by diplomacy of my own troops and political staff at Abu Sukhair, concerning whom but a few hours previously I had abandoned hope. It seemed too good to be true, and I met a large assembly of sheikhs the next day almost overwhelmed with the sense of the delicacy of the situation and the dread of treachery. My anxiety was soon to increase, for when Mann and I crossed the river to meet the sheikhs (nothing would induce them to come to our bank), the conversation seemed to indicate that they intended going back on their word regarding the evacuation of the Abu Sukhair garrison, and to claim that their promise had been the sparing of life if the garrison would surrender.

In this extreme I had no option but to take a very high-handed line. That the Arabs sincerely desired to see the last of the garrison at Abu Sukhair I could clearly see. I therefore told them I could not possibly contemplate surrender, and if that was what they sought there could be no possible reason for prolonging the discussion. Mann concurred in all I said, and the meeting was broken up under an agreement to meet again at 3 P.M. if they were ready to discuss with me the true terms they had mentioned

to Mann. In due course they asked for another meeting, and it is this request which I look upon as Mann's greatest triumph in his career in Mesopotamia. It was obvious to me that there were many at the meeting who could hardly bear to see one whom they had learnt to love so well defeated by trickery. To them his word had ever been his bond, and on this, as they well knew, possibly the last occasion when any of us might meet, their sense of right prevailed. Saving the touch they had had during the past months with an exceptional British officer, I much doubt their ever having debated the question of right and wrong. Mann's friends carried the day. The extremists were defeated. The truce was observed and both the Rumaitha and Abu Sukhair garrisons were relieved. I took Mann back with me to Kufa from the conference, much to his regret, but that he should not return to Umm al Ba'rur was one of the terms imposed upon me by the Arabs in return for the safe conduct of the Abu Sukhair garrison.

Five days later he died in my arms, mortally wounded by a sniper's bullet.

VII. BY LIEUT.-COLONEL SIR ARNOLD WILSON,
K.C.I.E., C.S.I., LATE ACTING CIVIL COMMISSIONER
IN MESOPOTAMIA.

J. S. Mann came out to us in August 1919. He had been selected originally as editor of the Baghdad *Times*, with which it had been intended to associate the general superintendence of the Arabic Press and various other literary Governmental activities.

It was very clear from my first interview with him that, with his aptitude and natural genius for acquiring a foreign tongue, he combined the qualities of leadership and insight which would make him of greater immediate value in the Administration as a District Officer, and I accordingly, with his cordial consent, appointed him on the Shamiyah Division. I saw little of him personally after that. Once or twice he visited Baghdad, and we had a few words together, and I saw with satisfaction how

rapidly he was developing those gifts which I had noted when he first came to Baghdad. I saw him twice at Kufa when I visited the Division officially, and was able to appreciate the enthusiasm and insight which he was bringing to bear upon the most difficult task before him, but he was reticent even then, almost to the point of silence. No officer that I have known in Mesopotamia made so many friends and so few enemies amongst the Arabs in so short a time. Distinguished alike amongst the little circle of brother officers who knew him and amongst the chiefs of the Division in which he worked for sympathy and insight, his death leaves a gap which will not be filled. The letter which he wrote to the *Nation*, which will, I hope, be published amongst his memoirs, shows him to have formed definite opinions at a fairly early stage, and to have had the courage of his convictions.


As to the manner of his death I am emboldened to quote a phrase of Kipling's :

Scarce had they lifted up life's full and fiery cup
 Than they had set it down untouched before them.
 Before their day arose they beckoned it to close—
 Close in confusion and destruction o'er them.

अजरामरवप्राप्तो विद्यामर्थं च चिन्तयेत् ।
गृहीत इव केशेषु मूयुना धर्ममाचरेत् ॥

HITOPADESA. 3.4.

As who should never die
seek Wisdom for thy goal:
as watched by Death's grim eye
Seek Righteousness, O Soul.



APPENDIX

THE TWELFTH DIVISION

[*Westminster Gazette*, November 26, 1915.]

WE marched and marched and marched all day, and every
day we marched,
Through the rich land of Flanders, till our lips were dry and
parched ;
Till we longed to fall by the roadside, by the rough, war-
worn road,
And we hated the dusty lorries, with their cheery, lazy load.

Through Blaringhem and Racquinghem and Erquinghem le sec,
Through Vieux Berquin and Neuf Berquin we tramped that
weary trek,
Till Hazebrouck and Bailleul were but memories of the past,
And the thundering guns drew nearer, and we cried aloud,
' At last ! '

So we came up to the world's end, where the roads lead east
to Hell ;
And away to north lies shattered Ypres, and south lies Neuve
Chapelle ;
And just across the way there the trains run to Berlin,
To Warsaw and to Kraguievatz and Turnu Severin.

And in one scarred, rank field there we both of us met our fate,—
Mine, all these weeks of weariness, and yours the golden
gate—
Where the Lys goes flowing idly from England to Germany,
And Frélinghien stands ruined in silent agony.

Oh ! never again shall we two meet where the roads lead east
to Hell,
Where many a time we sat together and told how, when Lille
fell,
We'd march away to the eastward, the long road to Berlin,
To Warsaw and to Kraguievatz and Turnu Severin.

TO A. G. HEATH.

[He was killed in an attack near the Hulluch Road, Oct. 8th, 1915.]

It seems so long ago
 Since in a musty Flemish lumber-room
 You made such music flow
 With master hand, as charmed away our gloom,
 Drawing from battered, broken keys
 And rusty wires such harmonies
 That we forgot war and the shadow of death
 And caught our breath
 To hear the hurrying clamour of your themes.
 So long ago it seems !

So long ago ! and now
 Your sun is set : but in our memory gleams
 Like some fair after-glow
 The image of those haunting magic themes.
 And as our halting hands essay
 What you so passionately would play,
 Far off we hear your music echoing yet ;
 And we forget
 That you are silent for us, save in dreams.
 So long ago it seems !

METEREN, 1915

Do you remember how we idly lay
 Among the roses under the hot June sun
 And talked of the adventure to be won
 Half carelessly, yet longing for the day
 When we should rise, and put our shams away
 For sterner things ? And when the day was done
 You played us music, Chopin, Beethoven,
 And Brahms, and many a folk-song grave and gay.
 And then we'd fall to wondering which should be
 The first of us to go . . . not anxiously,
 Nor over-much believing we could die.
 But as we went our ways we saw the night
 With sudden flashes terribly made bright
 And the guns far-off sang our lullaby.

TO MY PLATOON

ONE year we served together
 Through fair and foul, through calm and stormy weather.
 In cold and heat, in thirst and weariness,
 In loneliness:
 Toiling and labouring every day
 To fit us for the fray.

Through autumn's frost and chill,
 Through winter's rain and gloom we learnt to kill;
 Spring came and summer's heat, and we were fain
 To scorn the pain
 And horror of the battle, if we might
 Strike for the Right!

And in the shell-torn maze
 We proved the worth of all those weary days,
 And stood together firm even to the end,
 Longing to mend
 This broken world, to show a wondering earth
 Our free-born birth.

Even to the end! Too fast
 It came to me, and so forever passed
 The glamour of our busy, common life,
 And joy of strife:
 And some of you are sick, and some are dead;
 Soft be your bed!

THE DAYS OF LONG AGO

WE wandered east to Elsfield, to Oddington and Brill,
 We wandered north to Banbury and Bourton on the Hill,
 And south and west, where the White Horse rides proud o'er
 Thames' young flow.
 We wandered through the fair land in the days of long ago.

Oh! eastwards lie the Chilterns, and north the Cotswolds lie,
 And west and south the Vale lies cold 'neath the cold autumn
 sky:
 But you lie in Flanders, the coldest land of all,
 With the sandbags for your pillow, and the torn wire your pall.

Oh! fair's the Vale and fair's the hill, the high lands and
 the low—
 Fyfield and Ewelme, Idbury and Uffington and Stow:

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But yours is the cold land, the coldest land of all,
Where the sandbags are your pillow, and the torn wire your
pall.

And though we see them not again, maybe we'll meet below,
And talk once more of the land we loved in days of long ago—
Of Abingdon and Fairford, of Faringdon and Stroud,
Of Wantage and of Campden, of Bredon and Cleeve Cloud.

THE QUAKER

[The Chairman, in passing sentence, remarked that they were afraid the defendant did not fully realize the seriousness of his conduct.—*Times*, November 19, 1915.]

Was it for this you laboured night and day
To teach our blinded world how Mammon thrives,
Counting his daily hoard, his ill-got pay
Of widows, orphans, cripples, broken lives ?
Was it for this ?

Was it for this you faced an angry court
Of honest patriots, martyr for your faith ?
Caring not that they called you traitor, bought
By guilty gold, not fearing the spy's death ?
Was it for this ?

That you should be set down a prating fool
Playing with tools whose temper you knew not,
An empty dreamer, serving some outworn rule
Of Love toward all men, whatsoe'er their lot—
Was it for this ?

So we, that seek by other paths your goal,
We ask, was it for this that Laws were made—
To tear down Love and in her place extol
Hatred and all who thrive on Hatred's trade—
Was it for this ?

[At the Buxton Police Court on November 18, 1915, John Turner Walton Newbold, a schoolmaster and a Quaker, was summoned under Section 27 of the Defence of the Realm Act for writing a letter in June 1915, to the Editor of the *New York Call*, containing statements likely to interfere with the success of His Majesty's forces. He pleaded guilty, and was fined £25. The letter was a plea to the American nation to prevent the export of arms and munitions to Europe. It was pointed out by defendant's counsel that the aim of the letter was to stop the export to Germany as well as to Great Britain.]

SHIPPING NEWS

WHEN you've ploughed through special articles on Germany's
 Distress,
 Through jealous, jaundiced leaders on the Parliamentary
 Mess,
 Through Losses on the Western Front, and Ferdinand's Latest
 Ruse,
 At length you'll come to life again, to read the Shipping News.

For there's big ships and there's little ships still sailing the
 Seven Seas ;
 On some of them you'd be fair baked, on some of them you'd
 freeze ;
 From farthest North to farthest South, from China to Peru,
 Through the wide world they're sailing, and there's room for
 me and you.

Oh ! there's Nippon Yusen Kaisha will take you to Japan,
 There's the P. and O. for Shanghai, for Colombo and Penang,
 There's the Orient line for Brisbane, there's Bibby for Rangoon,
 The Pacific Steam for anywhere from Rio to Gatun.

Or if you'd knock about the world, not caring where you go,
 There's many a tramp in ballast bound that will not say
 you no,
 But will bear you off triumphant to the White Sea or the Red,
 (Though you'll not get to the Black Sea till many more be
 dead).

So you'll pass maybe an hour, and forget your broken bones
 As the waves glide swift beneath you, and the wind above
 you moans,
 While you dream of Pernambuco, of Las Palmas and Bordeaux,
 Of Brindisi and Bahia, of Manilla and Malmö.

GRIEG, CONCERTO IN A MINOR

Proud, bold the chords rise,
 Rise and sorrowing fall
 Once, then again cries
 Louder that brave call.
 Then the development,
 Passionate wild lament

Soothed by the flow of the voices beneath :
 Voices that ebb and flow
 Peacefully to and fro
 Calming those wild notes that echo of death.

Then rings triumphant—
 Brave and sure its song—
 Fearless the proud chant
 Though the fight be long.
 High above all it rings,
 Climbing on mighty wings,
 Spurning the voices that mutter of strife;
 Through sorrow glorious,
 Through doubt victorious,
 Rises unfaltering, conquering life.

DELIRIUM

GRADUALLY the patients, wearied to exhaustion by a day and a night in the living horror of the hospital train, settled themselves to uneasy slumber and restless dreaming; the lights went out, and only a dim red glow illumined the long ward, from the corner in which the night Sister spent her troubled vigil. Smith had only within the last half-hour passed from the perfect torpor of complete anæsthetization to the shuddering, half-intoxicated twilight of 'coming round.' His leg was anchored firmly to a large metal cradle reaching above his thigh; the bed seemed too short for him, and he was constantly striking his head on the bar at the top; moreover the mattress was tilted so that his legs were raised high above his head, which gave him a curiously suspended feeling, of the cause of which he was completely unaware. For he had no idea of the nature of his wound, could not have imagined that his condition was described as dangerous, or that a telegram had been sent to summon his mother to his side: all he knew was that the broken ends of bone in his leg had become endowed with motion, and were trying their hardest to force their way out through the torn flesh, at times desisting, to run races, as it seemed, up and down from thigh to ankle. That he was constantly sick he was hardly aware, but at times wondered, as an onlooker might, at the frequent visits of the Sister to take his pulse, till at length she came to sit beside him, and it seemed that he had known her for years.

Gradually the morphia dulled the edge of his sensations: his brain became less active and he ceased to wonder; his

critical faculties, which had before seemed as sharply divided from his body as two separate speakers in a dialogue, fell away into the shadows. The Sister looked closely at him for a moment, and marked on the hour-chart the word 'Asleep,' and the time. But it was not to the land of sleep that he had gone; and the morphia which held his body calm and quiet and numb could not chain the wanderings of his puzzled mind.

Suddenly he was back in his trench; now looking round his sentries, now crawling out to his listening posts, sharing the work, investigating, firing a few flares to annoy the industrious enemy, chatting with his sergeant and instructing his working parties. Everything was the same, except that there was over everything that he saw a kind of photographic flatness, so that men were but silhouettes, and sandbags were men. Looking more closely at this phenomenon he observed that all the men he spoke to had the same face, the face of his servant, a wrinkled humorous little man, ex-naval, who knew about everything, and was devoted to Smith. This seemed natural and yet unusual, until he remembered that Private Williams had long ago, in the days of training, announced his intention of sticking to Smith wherever he got, whether 'in among them Bosches or in some bloomin' 'orspital.' That was it: Williams had kept his word.

And now he was going back to report to the Major that all was well, for the 3 A.M. report on Operations was almost due: and then to his dug-out, a stinking, rat-haunted hole in a ruined farmhouse, where to-night he had a feeling that Something was awaiting him.

A STUDY IN NATIONALISM

MANDHUR was in many ways a great sheikh. The land of his tribe, steadily emerging from the great marsh, was in the 'nineties and the early part of the present century yielding the most abundant crops with the very minimum of labour: and he had become rich thereby. The luxuries of the rich in those days, before the times changed, took the form of an armed bodyguard: and armed bodyguards are more expensive even than Rolls-Royces: and the talents of the sheikh, which in the future will find their outlet perhaps in the pursuits of a country gentleman, were largely employed in what may truly be called a very real absorption in foreign politics, entering into alliances with the strong, subsidising the neutral, and crushing the poor.

Mandhur, who was a clever man, with even fewer scruples than some of his neighbours, and a real gift for tearing up his Secret Treaties at the right moment, played this game with great skill, and (for he was really a brave man) with great enjoyment. When all diplomatic channels were closed and it became necessary to show force, Mandhur rode out at the head of his braves: and as in the whole district for many miles round there was only one other sheikh who had a similar taste for the realities of fighting, the effect produced was as rare and inspiring as when in civilised warfare the Brigadier personally leads the Infantry over the top.

But in the fulness of time a strange foreign Government settled itself in Mandhur's country, and in its economy there was unfortunately no place for robber barons. It may be that the individual members of this government, largely officers of native armies, had a greater appreciation for the personalities of such anachronisms than was strictly in accordance with truly free and democratic principles: but even they could hardly devise a scheme of pensions and allowances for which the qualifications should be the morality of Scheherezade and the policy of the desert. Still, Mandhur was a sensible man, and while he occasionally sighed over the old days, he could still appreciate a peace which enabled him to go to the bath and the barber in his neighbouring town without an escort of fifty gallants, or to make by train in two days a pilgrimage which before meant a fortnight or more through the desert on horseback: and he was perhaps beginning to feel his years, for his hareem was not small, nor his sons few. But then appeared Jamil.

Jamil was a very well-educated and clever man, who had been clerk and Prime Minister to one of Mandhur's bitterest enemies upon the opposite bank of the river. He saw in the arrival of the new government a chance for himself, and as he had married into the family of his former master, the latter greatly favoured his plans. To cut a long story short, Jamil very soon obtained the ear of the local authorities, who at their first arrival did not know much of the ethics of a tribal society, and had neither time nor opportunity to learn the history of the local notables. They allowed themselves to be led, and in a very short time Mandhur found himself isolated, and his lands given to insignificant sheikhs of whom he was always saying (for he was in the eye of the desert very blue-blooded) that they had had no grandfathers.

So Mandhur bided his time and sulked, and by degrees there developed great talk of freedom, of the true Muslim's duty, and of the wickedness of this foreign oppression.

Mandhur, like many other landowners, was not much impressed by the attacks on the foreign government, but he feared and revered the utterances of holy men : and the machinations of Jamil were always before his eyes. So it happened that one day in a coffee-shop discussion he thought fit to reveal his mind among the men of the village who gather every evening to discuss the latest rumour and, if necessary, invent new ones : for conversation is the very life of the Arab.

Mandhur was silent for a time while Hasan opined this, Husain that, and Muhsin contradicted them all. Then suddenly he opened his lips : there was silence, for he was still a great man : and the speakers, who had been wandering airily in the region of great principles and unimpeachable maxims, were brought back to earth by the following words, spoken from the bottom of a very fierce heart. 'You talk of the possibility that the present Government will withdraw and leave us to manage ourselves. I wish it would. The first day you would see Jamil tied to a stake in the midst of you all, and me with my own sword cutting from his living body lumps of warm and bloody flesh.'

Jamil is a fat man, and at present strongly anti-Nationalist.

ADDRESS FROM THE INHABITANTS OF GHAMMAS

(Cf. p. 158—*Given in facsimile.*)

Umm al Ba'rur. His Excellency the Political Governor, Captain Mann—may his eminence endure !

Verily we residents of Kharm, in the district of Ghammas, offer our overflowing gratitude to Her Excellency the glorious British Government, in that we have received the favour of the appointment of your Excellency as political governor at Umm al Ba'rur, the district headquarters of our sub-district.

Seeing that of truth in former years every year at flood-time the water has encroached upon our district, so that we were robbed of our comfort by barriers of water isolating us from our dwellings and endangering our lives in our houses and possessions with risk of drowning ; and consequently were always unable to cope with it, so that the water always came in to the district and everything was spoilt again—now

when your Excellency settled into your residence in Umm al Ba'rur and visited our country and saw it with the eye of your compassion, truly you gave orders to the tribes to create a bank all round the district. Then following the high commandment of your Excellency the tribes assembled and made a bank about 2000 metres long, six metres broad and five metres high, and verily it was finished with most excellent workmanship. By this means we have secured our comfort entire, free from the sufferings and miseries that used to be our portion from the rise of the water: and without doubt from henceforth for evermore, thanks to the attention of your Excellency shown in this mark of favour, our district will increase and progress and prosper and its growth be completed, and all this by the presence of your Excellency and the nobility of your sympathy.¹ So again we present to your Excellency our gratitude and thanks from ourselves and every person living in the above-mentioned district, men, women and children, for the goodness of your attention to us; and we all, in your most eminent presence,² pray Allah that your stay in this place may be long and that you may be pleased by the doings of this your flock, and may remain victorious and prosperous.

¹ Exact sense doubtful—not pure Arabic. ² Very obscure in original.

THE END







when Sep 27 - 22

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